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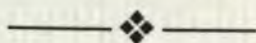
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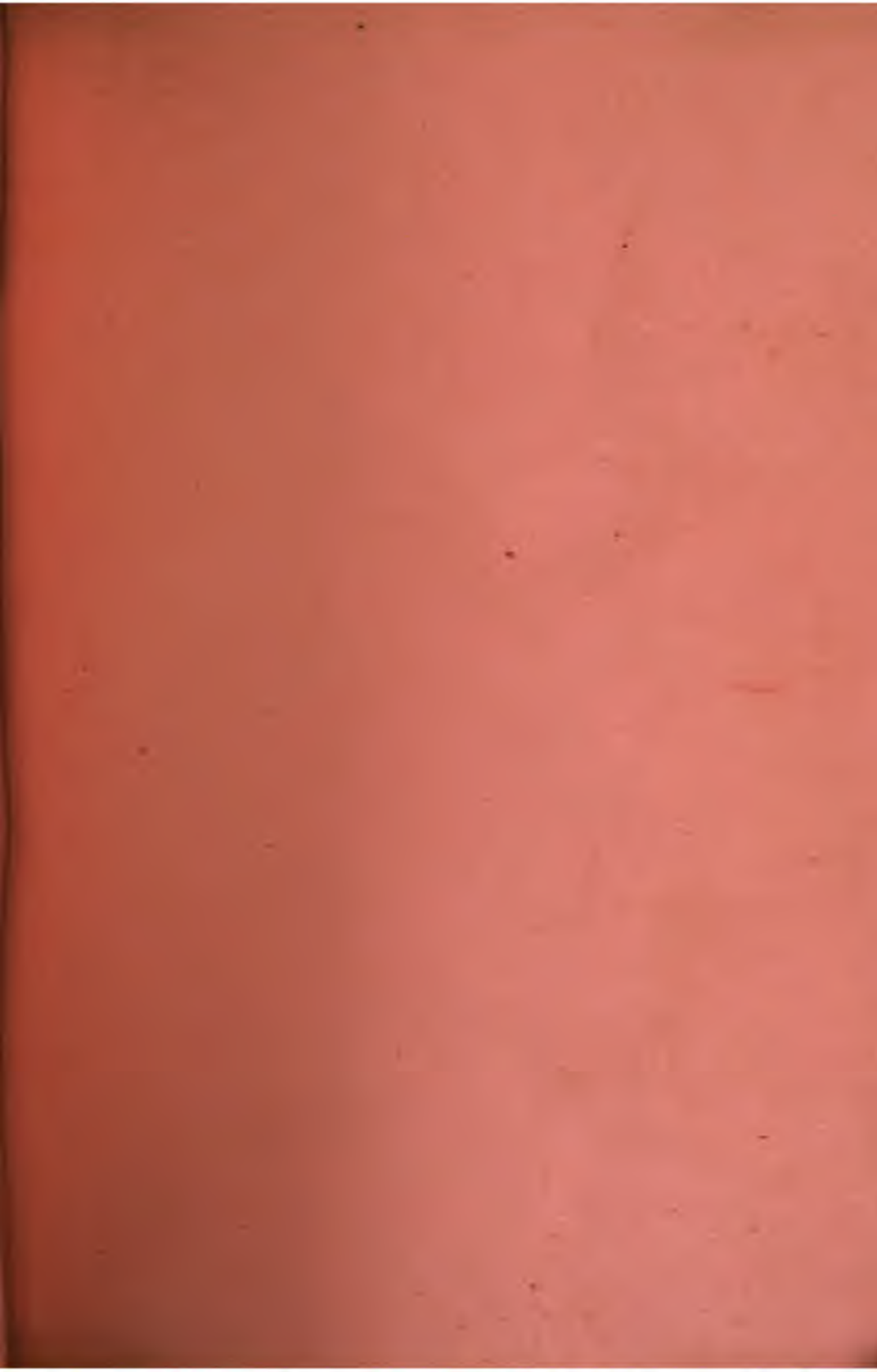
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AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS  
1650-1920



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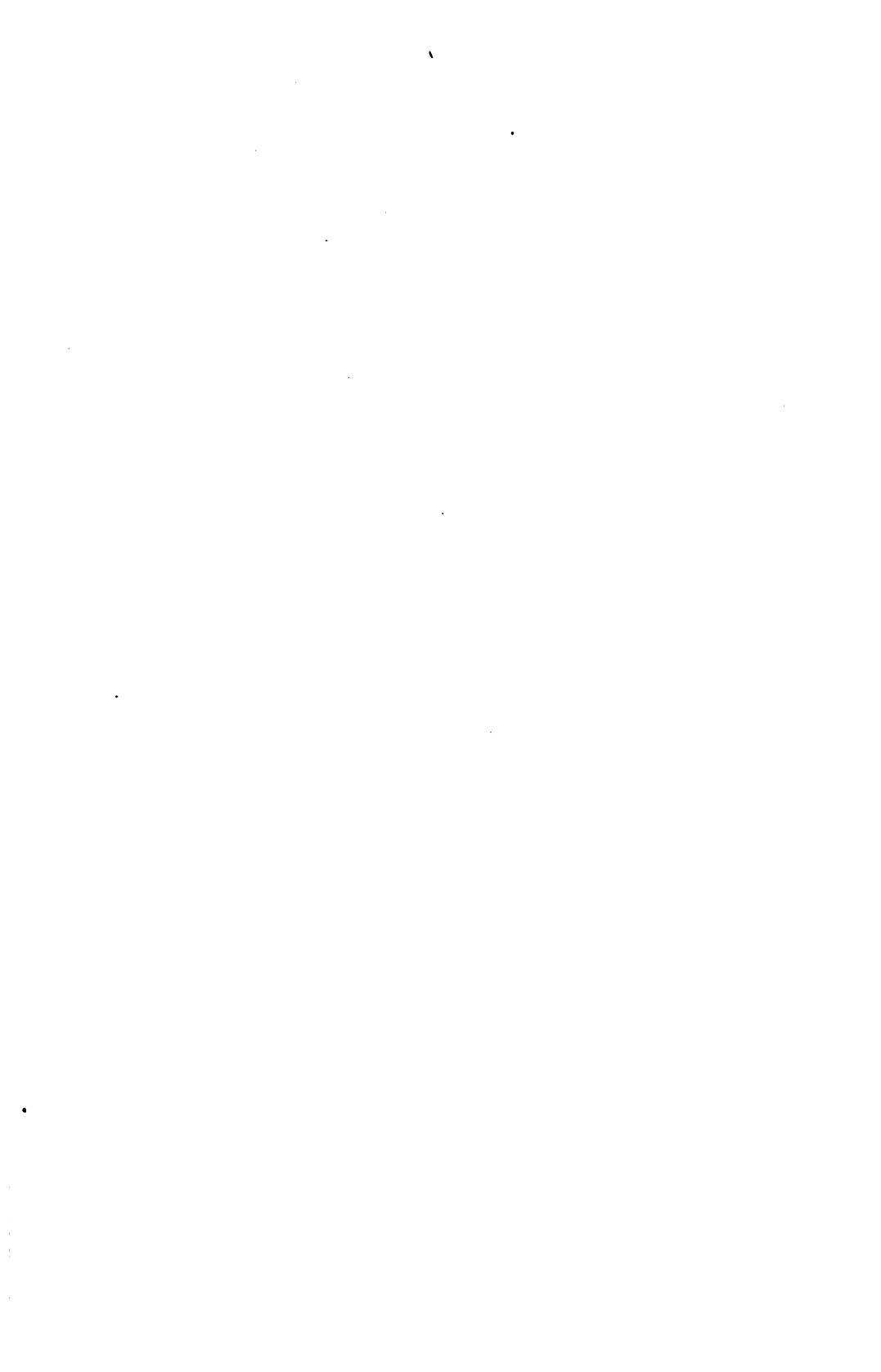


DAL  
#17427

Grace Stanley Parker  
Stockbridge, Mass

H. D. M.  
August 1885

Oct 15 1942  
Given to (Charlotte  
and her mother)  
Katherine Sedgwick









# LETTERS

FROM

CHARLES SEDGWICK

TO

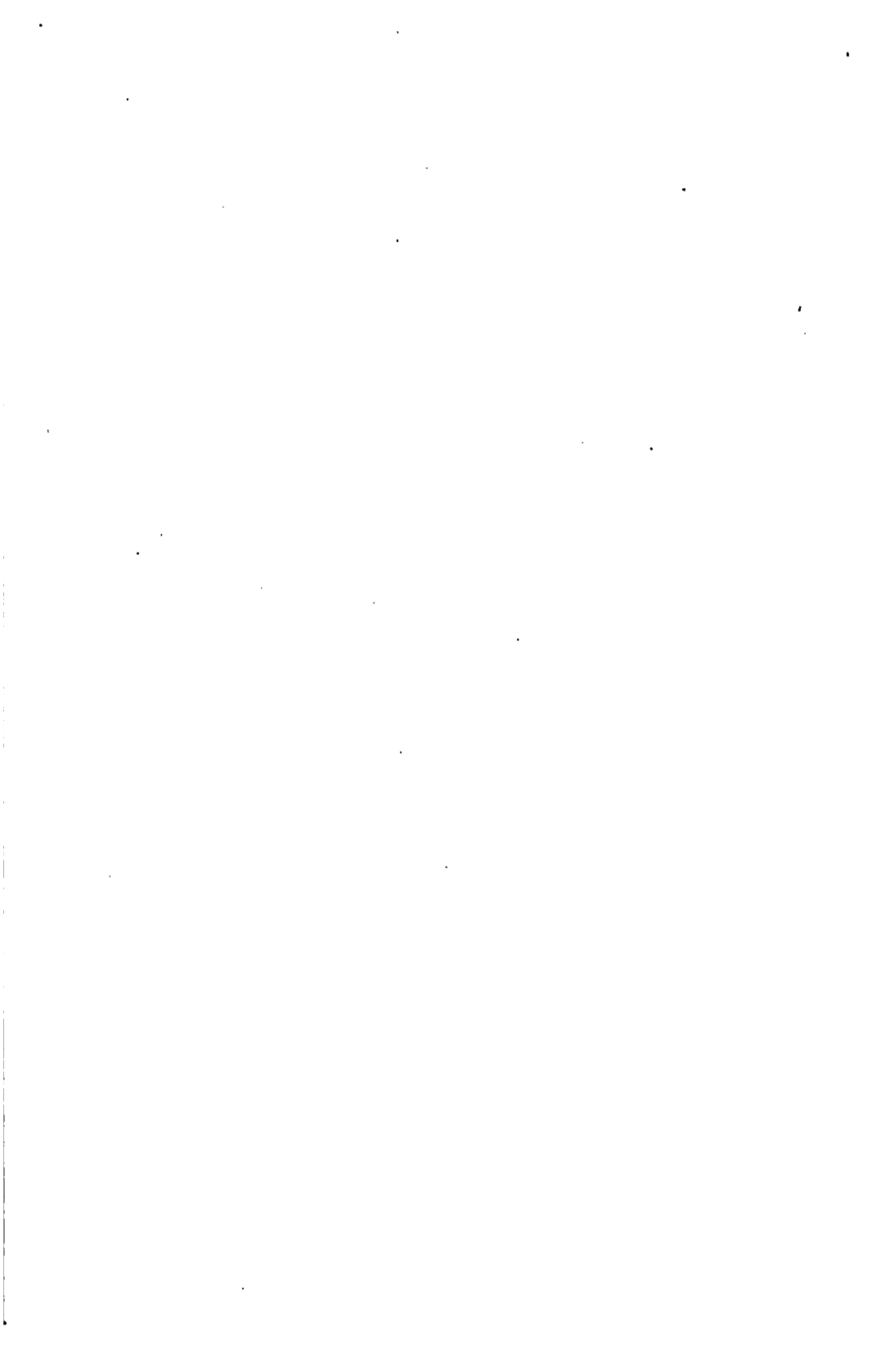
HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

"The heart of the good man—the man of honor, the gentleman—is as a lamp lighted by the breath of God; and none, save God himself, can set bounds to the efflux or irradiations thereof."

Lord Bacon says: "Such letters as are written from wise men are, of all the words of man, in my judgment, the best."

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BOSTON:  
PRIVATELY PRINTED.  
1870.



## PREFACE.

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MISS SEDGWICK began soon after the death of her brother Charles, to make a selection from his letters, to be printed for private use only, which should preserve a living portrait of him for his family and friends. The work proceeded slowly and with many interruptions, and after her first serious illness, in 1863, she was obliged to renounce it altogether. She had nearly completed the framework, and arranged the larger portion of the letters; the rest of the work she confided to me, with the most earnest injunctions to complete it, as her "precious legacy to all the dear children of our family." I have followed as far as possible, in doing it, the directions she gave me as early as 1860, for making selections for her use from my father's letters. These directions I append. I hope it will be found that I have followed them with tolerable fidelity.

K. S. M.

. . . . . "Before I proceed farther I will answer your inquiry about your father's letters. As to personality, you can judge in regard to your own letters better than I. But I would caution you against suppressing expressions of tender love and favor from motives of delicacy. They, above all others, characterize him, and will be of inestimable use and value to your children and children's children. Think, my dear



Kate, what it will be to them to have the freedom of the sanctuary of such a heart. After that I think every little thing involving family life and local history should be preserved. How we should like to have such records of our parents, our grand-parents. Now we live but in one generation. In reading over your father's letters to your Uncle Robert, I am more than ever struck with the heavenliness of his character, the simplicity and modesty of his boyhood, the confidingness, self-negation and humility of his youth, the delicacy, disinterestedness and self-denial of his early manhood, the wisdom, wit, nice discrimination, dignity, independence of his maturity, and above all, directing, inspiring, controlling all, his angelic love. In looking back upon our family life from a position that is like that of a retrospect from another life, and in comparing it with any other that I have intimately observed, the love and harmony kept aglow by a constitutional enthusiasm, seems to me unparalleled; and I look upon my parents, the source of it all, with an admiration and gratitude that I have no words to express."

## LETTERS.

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I HAVE selected from my brother Charles's voluminous letters the following, and have prepared them to be put in a permanent form for his family, and those of his friends who have expressed an earnest desire for their preservation. My father and mother, my brothers and sisters — all, are now transferred to an existence which was shadowed forth in uninterrupted love, harmony, and, as far as human condition permits, happiness here. Illness and death inflicted their sharp stings and lasting sorrows; but no coldness, disagreement, envy, rivalry or jealousy ever came among us. The law of love was fulfilled in that blessed home of our dear valley.

My brothers were all men of marked ability, of unostentatious devotion to duty, of tolerance, of humanity that was no respecter of persons, and of remarkable social tastes, powers and charm. Descended from a parent who, when public service was a duty, and political distinction an honor, held various high public positions, they neither sought nor desired them; and living in the best society in our country, they were free from the eager competitions and vulgar cravings that sometimes invade it. Four more unworldly men never lived. "In the world, they were not of it." They added immensely to the stock of family happiness, virtue and attraction by their marriages.

The dear children who are now knitting their fair young brows over their alphabets, or shouting over their playthings, our "Robby," "Blossom," and the little half Germana, will turn

back time's leaves, and learn from the vivid impress of these letters, the lives which without them could not have been definitely imaged on their day. I have preserved records of village life, and of every day domestic occurrences that may at first glance seem trivial. But these form the mirror that reflect the character of my brother. He wrought up to spirit the coarse material of rustic life. He infused sweetness and gladness into the home atmosphere. Wherever he passed there was a track of sunshine which, like the shadow of the Apostle, miraculously healed those upon whom it fell. If he met a neighbor, or crossed the path of a domestic, he had some word of kindness or fling of humor for them. "I have to laugh," said a conscientiously irrisible old deacon, "if I meet the Squire, for all it's Sabbath day!" One of his servants said, "If we get into ever such a snarl in the kitchen, and Mr. Sedgwick comes through, it all goes right." I have sometimes fancied that the favorite horse he fed, and the dog he caressed, responded by their natural signs of love when he talked to them. I remember a Yankee girl who, like his other domestics (as Sir Walter says of other servants), "loved him better than they served him," used to find her delight in listening to his humorous addresses to his cow, while he patted and fed her from his hand. "Ah," she said, "I had rather be Mr. Sedgwick than anybody in the wide world; and next to that, I had rather be Mr. Sedgwick's cow!" Truly he cared for his animals, as good parents care for their children. They were never neglected, forgotten, nor in any way overtaken. He was an indifferent sleeper, and not unfrequently rose in the night and walked out, and would look into the stable as a mother goes to her children's beds to see if they are well covered. On one occasion he found Twilight (a capital horse given him by Mrs. Kemble) cast, and in such a position that he must have died but for his master's timely intervention.

My brother was not a "philanthropist." If he went to the Jail (our County Jail is in Lenox) to turn the sinner from the error of his ways, to instruct the ignorant, or perform any angel office, he did not act from any theory of benevolence,

but he was drawn by the strain of the bond of brotherhood ; and his way of making these poor sinning vagrants better was to make them happier. He did not upbraid their darkness, but showed them how pleasant light was. He did not lament over their sickness and corruption, but dropped healing upon them, and made them feel how pleasant it was. To say that he was disinterested is but to say what has been said of thousands that never conceived the measure of his devotion to others. I want a new word to express his individuality. It was not only by ever ready material aid, often beyond the bounds of prudence, but by personal exertions ; I cannot say self-denial, for self never seemed to me to suggest a claim to be denied ; but by thoughtful opportune kindnesses, cheering words, pleasant sallies that lit up the dreariest tracks of the dreariest mortals, that he blessed his fellow creatures ; that he made so many feel that he was their earthly Providence, so that I have heard again and again from those that I had supposed knew him only by name, "Mr. Sedgwick was the best friend I ever had."

My brother had an ardent love of knowledge, and was keen in the pursuit of it ; but he did not seek it through the prescribed channels. He was no student, though he loved, reasonably, books. But it was by marking and comparing events, by a keen observation of character, by processes of analysis and distillation, by means of his sympathies and affections, that he enlarged his mind and heart. He would have suspended any mental pursuit of enjoyment to save a poor Irishman from a fraud, or have left the society of any notoriety to rescue a neighbor swamped in his own stupidities.

My brother Charles never wrote elaborately, never in formal didactics. The moral evolved spontaneously. It *came out* like the perfume from the flower. He wrote as the spirit moved him, in snatches of time ; before breakfast, in intervals of importunate visitors in his office, or of tedious legal processes in the court house, and in moments of solitary leisure. He seldom invaded the social family evening with pen and ink. Besides his family, to whom in their separations his providence was ever present by his letters, he wrote to innumerable friends



("fellow creatures" were the better term) to whom he could send a friendly word of help or cheer. He had no aptitude at murmuring or moaning. If compelled to weep with those that wept, he soon contrived to slip the burden from the laden shoulders and change the weeping to smiles. There was no more apparent effort than in the processes of nature. He cured by no secret art. His healing balsam was a divine extract from faith in God and love to man.

I have included in this collection but a part of my brother's letters to me; still, without an explanation, their preponderance over the letters to his wife and children might be imputed to egotism. It must be remembered that our joint lives began long before his conjugal relations, and that we were separated during the winters. Nor, I trust, shall I be unkindly judged for the insertion of many expressions of partial love, a fraternal love never surpassed. These fond records will not meet many eyes till mine are closed forever. I tranquilly confide them to the loving memories of my family and friends. They will judge me charitably, and I believe will approve the communication of the testimonials of an affection that was God's best gift to me, the joy and beauty of my life in my brightest years, and my support and consolation when one light after another had gone from our family life. Our hearts were knit together. As our love was at first, so it was to the last.

There is no satisfactory portrait of my brother to which I might refer those who never saw him. The portrait by Gray, in the possession of his wife, is the most accurate delineation of his features, but the face fails in his expression; it is the landscape without sun or shadow, and the person has nothing of the careless grace of his. The photograph in which he appears standing by Judge Bishop in his wagon, expresses precisely his carriage and natural attitude.

The water-colored drawing, done by Miss Freeman for me the last winter of his life, gives his softness and tenderness, but it has a fixed seriousness not natural to him, indicating the protracted and fatal illness that was upon him. His voice was clear, of musical and varied tone, sweet and animating; his laugh delightful.

How often in these last darkened years of our separation, have I seemed to hear his light footstep as he approached my little parlor, and that inquiry still vibrating on my heart, "Is my sister here?"

The following passages are extracts from a notice of my brother, which appeared in a Boston journal soon after his death. It is written with a nice perception of the distinguishing traits of his character, and as not liable to the imputation of sisterly partiality, I preserve it.

. . . . . "Living in what, for the best years of his life, was a sequestered village, without fame in his profession, without wealth or distinction, no man in his section of the State—perhaps no man in the whole State, was more beloved, admired and cherished than he. He was a man to be loved. He had a combination of qualities as rare as genius. He was as honest, as brave, as clear-headed as any man, and he had the tenderness, the fine instincts and the subtle perceptions of a woman.

"His observation was so alert that all which the senses could give him was his, and he made it material of solid judgment, and a penetrating scrutiny of men and things. No man noted more of what is fugitive and entertaining in the hour as it passes, no man laid up greater treasures of experience, and no man ever made his experience serve more for the amusement and instruction of his friends. With his quick eye and ready expression, he had a sense of the ridiculous which lighted up the world for him and his friends. His pleasantry was delightful. It was the fruit of every day, so natural, so piquant, nothing stored up and nothing labored. It was unexpected when you heard it, and was forgotten before you could repeat it. Nor was his graver conversation less attractive. It was the thought of a serious and discerning man, interested in the past and in the present, full of amusing disquisitions, the humor often near to pathos, and not wanting in depth either; his reflections singularly just, and the whole tone of his remarks showing that discriminating sense which we expect from men of the world.

and with a perfect courtesy, too sincere to have been learned from men of the world. But Mr. Sedgwick's true glory was his humanity. His wit, his raillery, his observation, all those inimitable graces of the intellect, were servants of a native and living love of everything that breathed.

"Every move for political freedom and for the removal of social evils, had his attention, not as matter of duty, but as a matter of course. It was part of his life. The criminal in the neighboring gaol, and the dog at his door, never looked in Mr. Sedgwick's face, nor heard his voice, without feeling he had a friend."

My brother Charles was born on the 15th of December, 1791.<sup>1</sup> The circumstances that preceded his birth did not, according to any physiological laws, indicate the coming of the blessing that he proved. My father was inevitably absent, devoted to the political duties that then demanded and engrossed the strongest hearts and minds in the country. My beloved mother, with exhausted health and an anxious mind, overburdened with the multiplied responsibilities of a large family and a large landed property, fell into a melancholy. There were then in this remote district few of the facilities of civilization. The head of the family was its purveyor; forecast was forever in exercise. There was no butcher's cart, no supply of fruit or vegetables beyond the private domain. Bread and butter were furnished from the farm, and the wool and flax grown upon it had to be distributed for domestic manufacture and overseen, as they were by the thrifty wives of Solomon's day, that "rose early and looked well to the ways of their household." This was all well enough for those who were bred to rustic health and rustic cares, not complicated with the refinements of a higher social condition, and with the demands of a refined nature whose wants were stimulated by mental culture, as were my mother's. As the honored wife of my father, she was brought into relations with the best society in the country, at a period when, if con-

<sup>1</sup> The day of Washington's death.

ventional education was neglected, the highest gifted minds were in constant action. There was, in my mother's case, one alleviation, almost a compensating circumstance. Instead of ignorant Celts to execute her behests, she had excellent trained servants; and at their head, Mumbet, herself embodied ability, rectitude and fidelity. In addition to her other multiform services, she was my mother's nurse. I have often heard her relate the particulars of my mother's confinement when my brother Charles was born. My father got leave of absence from Congress, to be at home through the most perilous period. "The baby was nothing to look at," said the dear old nurse, "when he was born. The Judge (so she latterly styled my father) said 'he was not worth raising.' 'Sir,' says I, 'I will try it.'" So, by tending the poor little unfledged boy on a pillow, cushioning his arms, and putting in appliance her miraculous skill and vigilance, she brought him in three or four months to such a condition, that, as she said, "when the Judge came home again I took him to the cradle where the baby was sleeping, and I threw off the blanket and showed him a plump, rosy boy—a perfect beauty. 'There, sir,' says I, 'is that boy worth raising?' Tears came in the Judge's eyes, and he took a silver crown out of his pocket and gave it to me, and I have it now in my trunk." And there she kept the trophy till her death—forty years afterwards.

There was a stanza made by one of our rustic poets on my father's coming home for this event, (and it was no trifle then to come from Philadelphia to Stockbridge in mid-winter), that illustrated the simplicity of the times:

" Maria, dear lady, how blessed is thy lot,  
O'er so noble a husband to bear such a sway.  
For sure very dear must that lady be thought,  
Who is valued at more than six dollars a day."

"Six dollars a day" was then the pay of a member of Congress.

I do not know the precise date of my father's removal from Sheffield to Stockbridge. This removal was occasioned by the unhealthiness of Sheffield, caused by a pond of stagnant water. A remnant of the Stockbridge tribe of Indians yet lingered in the valley. Their wigwams were strewed along the plain, and



my father bought the land on which he built his house, erected his barns and planted his garden, of three different Indian proprietors. The lot on the west side of his house was purchased of an Indian woman, who, with the baptismal name of Elizabeth, had engrafted the Christian virtues on the aboriginal stock. The ground bore her name, and was called in our time, "The Elizabeth lot." My brother Charles and myself were the only members of the family born in the new house. Robert was the first child born in Stockbridge.<sup>1</sup>

Charles, "the infant love of all his race," from the first entered upon the fortune of the youngest, the accumulated love of the brothers and sisters who preceded him. He is mentioned in my parents' letters, written during his childhood, as "the good little man," "our sweet little Charles." There was an incident of his childhood that my father often recalled, and never related without emotion. My father's riding horse, Rover, a traditional family hero, then young and spirited, was saddled and tied to a post. My father went out to mount him and saw Charles, then in petticoats, lying on the ground between the horse's hind legs, caressing him in his baby tongue, "poo 'ovy, poo 'ovy!" The horse did not move a hair, but as my father said, looked round "affectionately" at the boy. My father had the presence of mind to stand still and call the child away in a low, loving tone. Is there not a bond of love binding together all sentient beings that is felt by the gentle and loving of our race? And is it not this that Hawthorne has exaggerated and distorted in the "Marble Fawn"?

Gentle and tender-hearted as my brother was, he was not wanting in the manly spirit to oppose wrong, or the fortitude to endure suffering. This was early and notably manifested. He was not more than six years old, I think less than five, when the "district school" which we both attended was kept by a brutal fellow named ——. He punished the children by blows on the hand with a ferule made of a thick bit of lead enclosed in leather. My poor little brother fell under his displeasure for

<sup>1</sup> He was born in the house now called the Edwards School, from its occupancy by Jonathan Edwards.

some slight offence. He was called up, and five or six stinging blows inflicted. Charles looked the master steadily in the face without flinching. "You think to face me down, do you?" said the wretch; "I'll make you bawl out before I finish!" and he resumed the blows and went on to the nineteenth, when there was a general outburst in the school, a mingling of rebellious shouts and heart-broken sobs, mine, as I was told, overpowering the rest. The little hand was raw, and poulticed and carried in a sling for many days. My father was absent in Congress, but the man was driven from the town by that energetic justice, since termed "Lynch Law."

Children do not treasure one another's histories. They are not impressed by them. They have not the philosophy by which the kernel of character is extracted from the shell of circumstance. Our childhood, so happy and so blessed, had one dark shadow upon it: my mother's recurring and dreadful illnesses. These illnesses took the dreaded form of insanity, a malady far more terrible then, than now that the appliances of science have so much ameliorated its treatment, and almost insured its cure. Still it is, of all the bodily ills that flesh is heir to, most feared by some persons, and therefore I should be glad to soften the apprehension that any one of my mother's descendants may suffer from the fear of a constitutional tendency to this disease, by stating the reasons of my conviction, that in the cases of my mother and brother the insanity was what the physicians term accidental, and not caused by any inherited taint. I have never heard of its existence in any of my mother's predecessors. Her first attack was after the birth of my sister Frances, when she (my mother) had childbed fever, and a long illness that ended in insanity. This recurred three or four times during her life, and each time continued for some months. She was of a delicate and nervous structure, liable to severe illnesses, which were treated in the harsh medical modes of the time. She was overburdened with care and afflicted by the gloomy tenets of Calvinism, no abstractions to her sensitive nature. I have already noticed her severe family cares, and the privation for a good part of every year of the presence

of her husband, and the cheerfulness of his society. Her illness had, perhaps, an effect that we could not then appreciate, in rebuking the presumption of youth and drawing closer the bands of affection. My father had the divine gift of *authority*. His children never rebelled against it. He was strict only in requiring among us the reciprocal offices of love, "the fulfilling of the law."

I do not remember a jar, a dispute, a jealousy in our household. My sisters were both married before I was eight years old. Of course, as the only girl in the family, I became the subject of more love than I deserved, and naturally regarding myself as a primary object, I was unconscious of my brother's superior deserts. He was a beautiful boy, with a high colored fair skin, soft curling hair, and loving blue eye, and a mouth that retained through life a feminine delicacy and beauty, and to the last became more and more angelic in its sweetness.

The following letter, written to Charles by my father when he was in Congress, shows the tenderness of the relation between them. Charles was then nine years old.

*Washington, 17th Feb., 1801.*

MY DEAR CHARLES :

I have received another charming letter from my dear little son. It is a long one, and yet there is not one word that is not spelt right. I am sorry that you have not received letters from me, for there has been but one week since I received your first letter, in which I have not written to my dear son. The affectionate manner in which you speak to me gives me great delight, but I have more in perceiving your dutiful tenderness to your mamma. You also express yourself charmingly about your sister's leaving us. I, too, shall feel very much distressed in losing her company, but we must hope that she will be happier. Nothing else would reconcile a father who loves his children as I love mine, to their leaving him for one day. Farewell,

my dear child ; continue to be good, and not only your parents and your brothers and sisters, but all good people, will love you.

Your ever aff'te,

THEODORE SEDGWICK.

In 1806, Charles was at a classical family school, kept by Dr. Backus, in Bethlehem, Connecticut. He was a noted clergyman, with superior intelligence and considerable learning for the moderate requirements of those days, and particularly charming from a combination of quaint humor and affectionateness, qualities that found a correspondence in my brother. He was an ardent politician too, on the federal side, and he saturated his pupils with the sprinkling of his own enthusiasm. Charles, in a letter written before he was fifteen, to me, a girl patriot two years older, says: "I beheld yesterday the total eclipse of the sun, but not with pleasure, because I felt with it the total eclipse of federalism in the Bay State." . . . "I have news enough, news of the vilest sort." He goes on to detail some unfair proceeding imputed to the democrats in the Senate of the United States.

In 1807, after hearing of a severe illness of our mother, he says: "Good heavens! what were my emotions when I heard this news! The voice of nature rung through my soul. I am afraid she cannot long sustain these attacks on her feeble frame, but I know she is in the hands of a kind and righteous Providence, who has sustained her through the severest trials. Oh, for my own sake, I most sincerely wish she may be restored. But the holy will of God be done. She is resigned, and prepared for that perfect bliss which, in this world, has been mixed with the most bitter alloy. Imprint upon mamma's lips kisses from her son."

I well remember—the picture has remained undimmed on my memory from that long gone day to this—the face of this dear boy when, in the following month of September, he was recalled by my mother's death. I stood at the open back-entry

door awaiting him. The chaise was driven up, and he got out languidly and stood still, as if all natural impulses and laws of attraction had lost their power over him. I have since heard him speak of the pressure of his grief in that hour as so dreadful that he did not wish to live. But there was no subsidence of his filial affection, no abatement of the force of its current. It all flowed towards his surviving parent. From that time he devoted his life to his father. For him he threw away every personal consideration. He steadily refused a collegiate education, because it would take him from home. He knew his importance there, and he grievously underrated the intellectual faculties which deserved the best opportunities of cultivation. He carried out to the fullest extent in his life, the feelings and purposes expressed in the following letters:—

*October 1, 1811.*

MY DEAREST FATHER:

. . . . . We are all well, and get along as well as we could wish to without you. The more I understand the nature of filial obligation, the more desirous am I of performing all the offices of a dutiful child; and the more I am capable of appreciating the excellence of your character in its family relations, the more anxious am I to repay your kindness *to me* with a more than common tenderness and love. If, as a son, I am to be distinguished from others, I hope it may be by a heart whose tenderness and sympathy shall impart comfort, whose sensibility to a parent's suffering shall lighten its weight, whose gratitude shall repay every kindness, and whose prayers shall be answered by the best of Heaven's blessings to the best of fathers.

*Stockbridge, April 2, 1812.*

DEAR FATHER:

. . . . . I am afraid your degenerate sons will never find a remedy for disease in corporeal exertion. I am

sure one of them would be satisfied if his life could be as happy as your's has been, not barely from the reputation, but from the consciousness of virtue. There is a charity of the mind as well as of the purse, and whilst your money has relieved the sufferings of some, you have enlightened and improved others with those qualities of the heart and the head which all but the most ignorant admire, and all but the base endeavor to imitate. Long, long may your country retain one of its purest patriots, and your children the best and tenderest father, is the desire and prayer of one who considers the preservation of your life as the security of his happiness, and the continuance of its peace as his greatest blessing. With no other recommendation than good will, I have secured your kindest love. May the heart you have never distrusted, forever cherish towards you all that is tender in affection, and all that is obedient in duty.

There is a singular simplicity in Charles's early letters. Their pervading and predominating quality is love. The two following he wrote me while I was in New York, in February and March, 1812.

*February 6, 1812.*

MY DEAR CATHERINE :

Since I returned from New York, my heart has so often warmed at the kind mention that you and my dear sister Frances have frequently made of me, that I should disgrace my affection if I did not acknowledge the gratitude and pleasure they have produced. This memorial of my love is only an evidence that the record is made in a better place, where I will cherish all that is pure and sincere in affection, till the poor tenement that contains my heart shall surrender its charge. Our state hereafter is hidden from our knowledge, still I look

forward with a continual but fearful hope to the time when all that is holy in affection, and all that is blessed in virtue shall be our inheritance. If it is a part of the consolation of the virtuous that they have done good to others, I hope and pray that the example and instruction of our dear sainted mother may have such an influence on our character and lives as that they may be her best and happiest reward. 'Tis the felicity of some minds that they receive their character from the examples of the good ; may it not be our misfortune that the blessed and lovely example of human excellence which our mother displayed, and which *should* be sanctified by such a relation, has not left some traces of its image on our hearts and our lives. . . . The merit of my letter must consist in the mention of little things. It would be injustice to our most excellent Sarah, if I did not mention her affection for you, and the great interest she takes in sister Fanny and the children. Old Jenny, too, under a most unseemly and filthy covering, has an excellent heart. These may seem trifling, but if we consider the sum total of our happiness, the kindness and fondness of domestics is no unimportant item.

*Stockbridge, March 5, 1812,*

MY DEAR SISTER :

*Your* letters are indeed sweet messengers, and nothing could be more cheering and delightful than the sight of them, excepting the lovely image that they so forcibly and pleasingly bring to my recollection. You reproach me, my dear Kate, with flattery. . . . When I write to you I want to delineate a character which you always exhibit, which I hope always to aspire to, but which I can never expect to attain. In contemplating myself, I can find very little to be satisfied with, very little that does not make me blush, except that honest and

sincere affection which always swells my heart in relation to my dear father, and my dear brothers and sisters; an affection commensurate with the virtue and love of its objects, and which I trust will not perish, so long as the memory which contemplates it shall last. I may be *totally* depraved, but I never shall believe it, till it is proved to me that this is an evidence of my vileness. *Self, self* is the destroyer of all good. I own I derive my greatest happiness from the consideration that those I love, love me also; yet if I am driven to this last resort to maintain my opinions, I am resolved to love virtue for its *own sake*, not for the good or the happiness it produces; and when I bring you, and such as you, to illustrate my position, that some good thing belongs to the unregenerate, I shall triumph in the argument.

How deeply my mother impressed her character on her youngest child, appears from a letter written in 1812, in which he, in alluding to her, says:

"If it is a part of the consolation of the virtuous that they have done good, I pray that the instruction and example of our sainted mother may have such an influence on our character and love, as that they may be her happiest and best reward."

In November, 1808, my father married Miss Penelope Russell, of Boston, and for the first time there was a discordant element in our family. My sisters were married. My elder brothers were in professional life, or preparing for it, and the trial and unhappiness fell most heavily on Charles and myself, who were the only children of the family living at home; much the most heavily on him, as I passed a good portion of my time either in Albany or New York.

We *all* revered our father above every human being. We all, with reason, loved him devotedly, and it was the study of all during the four years that this lady was in such close relation



to us, to conceal from him how distasteful she was to us, and how painfully we felt her unfitness for her place. Domestic affections and home harmonies had been the element of my father's life, his aim and success, his rest, his paradise after political occupations and legal labors. He had been drawn by female officiousness into a great error. We felt it to be an error rather than a fault, and that it was our filial duty, so far as we could, to avert its consequences. Mrs. Sedgwick had the *esprit de société*, a pleasant vivacity, and very kind disposition by nature, not worn quite threadbare by forty years of a selfish, single life of levity, and the sort of frittering dissipation incident to a single woman's social life in a fashionable town circle. I believe she meant well, and she was, or seemed, in the first months of their marriage, devoted to my father. But our country life was as unsuited to her as the work of a beaver to a butterfly, and she soon became a languid valetudinarian, petulant and annoying to the last degree.

Charles instinctively knew how to pick out of every duty of life a sweet kernel, and throw away the shell and bitter integument that might enclose it. He was invariably attentive and kind to Mrs. Sedgwick, and she, not discerning that the kindness sprang from the love rooted in his heart for his father, received it as a tribute to herself, her *amour propre* was satisfied, and she felt his excellence as well as one could who had no scale in her own mind by which to measure it. At this period he deliberately renounced his chances for the prizes of life for which his brothers had cast in, and nominally a student in my father's office, he devoted himself in my father's absence to the care of his rural affairs, and when he was at home, to an intense devotion to his happiness. Thus passed four years, of which I find little record in his few letters of that period remaining. He was coming into manhood. He assumed none of its authority. Handsome and graceful, and always having an indescribable social charm, he contented himself in the obscurity of country life, and then, and for many years, perhaps always, reckoned himself as much below his brothers in intellectual gifts, as he was in intellectual opportunities. And they (I think certainly

not from any arrogance or presumptuous self-estimation) for a long time accepted this rating. Apparent are often mistaken for real distances, and the spaces must be traversed to rectify the judgment. Time set all right, and respect caught up love in our estimate of the "youngest," "the favorite and the flower."

On the 24th of January, 1813, our beloved father died in Boston. Charles, in a letter dated three weeks later, says: "When I reflect upon the uncertain tenure of our best blessings, I tremble, and the desolation of my heart gives a fearful darkness to all around me. I feel a withering sensation, which I believe my countenance never expresses." (No; the serene faith of a man and the love of an angel were stamped there.) "But when I recollect how many and how precious are the blessings still left, how much love is still exercised towards me, my heart revives, and I hope my melancholy is not expressed by murmuring." My brother's humility had no taint, no admixture of vanity, no craving for contradiction or reassurance. He writes to me, at Albany, in March, 1813: "I have watched but once with the sick at Hicks's, and I hope not then in disobedience to your injunction. I have not got the fever!

"When I reflect how much you and my other sisters, and my dear brothers love me, and when I reflect how idle and irrational is my life, how unproductive of good to any one, I feel as if I should be perfectly willing by my death to put the *seal* on that *love*, and consecrate it forever."

My brother passed a part of the winter of 1813 with me, in New York, at the house of Mr. Watson. Robert was then a bachelor, and lived in his family. I am glad to have this opportunity of paying the tribute of my testimony to my brother-in-law's generous hospitality and uniform kindness to his guests.

And now in quoting a passage from a letter to me, written after my brother's return, I wish to assign a reason (I will not call it an apology), for the large proportion of letters addressed to me in this collection, and for not suppressing the fond expressions of his affection. We were united as few, bearing the relation of brother and sister, ever have been, from the beginning of our lives to his death. He excelled me in everything

but affection ; mine for him could not be overpaid. Tenderness was so predominant a quality of his character that no portraiture of him could be just, where this divine essence was not fully manifested. And, further, I hold it as a part of my gratitude to God, and to my brother, to set forth the sweet food of my life.

After his return to our home, he writes me of all he has done about the grounds to please me. He adds:

“Everything, in the house and about it, seems to me to be waiting for your presence. Your flowers will not bloom for strangers to their beauty, and the clouds cast their shadow on the earth as if there were none here fit to shine on. I spent a fortnight at Lenox, and the weather was just fit to attend Court in.”

After returning to Stockbridge from Albany, where he had left me, he writes, March, 1815:

When are you coming home? I am afraid to sleep in a deserted house. Oh! I forgot to tell you about my journey. In the first place, I went to sleep in the third story of a house on this side the river, where two blankets would not have kept me warm. I called to mind that there was many a poor fellow in the camp with only one. Why this reflection should have kept the frost from freezing my limbs, when there was nothing else to prevent it, and when my imagination was filled with images of men on the ground stiff with cold,<sup>1</sup> is not for me to explain, but I believe this is the way in which one man's misery is another man's comfort; for I no sooner thought of those poor devils with one blanket, than I went quietly to sleep and slept till four o'clock, when one of those rascals called stage drivers, a kind of people “who wake on the night and sleep on the day,”

<sup>1</sup> We were still at war with Great Britain, and there was a cantonment at Greenbush.

and who benevolently wish all passengers to have the same kind of enjoyment, came thundering into my room. When I got over my indignation against the fellow, I was very willing to quit my lodging, for I could see no earthly object in staying there, but to freeze to death. I hastened to the bar room, where I searched for the remains of the fire of the night before. The stove seemed to be converted into an urn, in which to deposit the ashes of the departed sticks, and preserve the memory of joys that were past, for I could perceive no wood to kindle, by its cheering blaze, new joys. However, I had not so much respect for the memory of said joys as the landlord, and I cried out for more wood. He muttered something about its being scarce. I then called for a glass of brandy, and when I had swallowed it I left his house, making my curses as plenty as his wood was scarce. I then began my ride in an open wagon with the jolly driver, but we had not proceeded far when he made an observation that startled me. He slapped his hand on his knee and said, "Faith! it's most cold enough for gloves!" "Faith!" thinks I, "this fellow says it's only cold enough for gloves; he must be a devil or he could not be so warm." But I soon became pacified, for I reflected that the principal means of mischief which that gentleman possessed was *heat*, and I had nothing to fear from that in any degree. We rode on, and from that moment the supposed Satan and I were better friends than ever. I was fully convinced I could not survive that day — what with the jolting of my body over the ruts and hubs and the piercing cold. The causes of my destruction continued, and I hourly grew weaker. I then thought of disposing of my earthly estate and leaving it to you; but then I thought you would be so much elated at the acquisition of so much property, that you would come down to

take possession and come to the same unhappy end with myself. This thought revived me, and being helped by a drop or two of that enemy to colds and fevers, and all other maladies but drunkenness and a broken constitution, I began to hope I should live to get home and enjoy my property, which would be vastly better than leaving it to the dearest friend on earth! I leave myself at the first tavern, McKown's, and you may get me home as well as you can.<sup>1</sup>

The following extract is from a letter written to me while I was staying in Boston, in Oct., 1815:

MY DEAR SISTER:

There is something very different in the manners of the people of Boston from anything that *I* have ever seen connected with the hospitality of any other place. It consults the feelings, dispositions and circumstances of its guests. When one requires sympathy, there is no obtrusion of civility. When one is in a situation and temper to receive and requite attentions, there is no withholding of generous politeness, generous without ostentation, sympathetic without the disgusting forms of condolence. It seemed to me, I don't know but it might have been enthusiasm (but that you know I never was accused of), that the people of Boston never gave their invitations to swell the pomp and ceremony of an entertainment, but to diffuse happiness as widely as possible. There are exceptions, I know; there are always fools who think of nothing ultimately but themselves, who are willing to have their vanities flattered, for this simple reason, that they have nothing else that can be

<sup>1</sup> This account, though humorously exaggerated in its mental effects, may cause his grandchildren, who now travel from St. Louis to Lenox in sixty hours, to feel a *little* gratitude for rail-cars.

flattered; but this is not the characteristic of the people of Boston.

In July, 1817, Charles went to Saratoga to rid himself of the remains of inflammatory rheumatism still lingering about him. The first attack was, I think, in 1814, and came from sleeping in a bed into which the rain fell. He was on the way to Albany with me. I had been ill all winter. My sister Susan came to Stockbridge to take me to her home. We were overtaken and detained by a thaw, and the disastrous consequence was this rheumatism, from which my brother suffered repeatedly and intensely, and which, I believe, laid the foundation of the disease of which he died.

I have found on my files no letters from Charles between the years 1815 and 1819. I must charge this to my carelessness for we were separated for the most part during the winters of those years, and never, I believe, when we were separated, did a week pass without an interchange of letters. In September 1819, my brother married Elizabeth Dwight, at her father's house, in Northampton. From this marriage resulted much of the contentment, happiness and success of his life. I give the following extracts from the letter he wrote me on his engagement. I need hardly say that I knew the whole story of his love, and the purpose for which he had gone to Northampton.

*Northampton, Sunday night.*

MY DEAR SISTER:

I arrived here on Friday evening, at eleven o'clock, two hours later than I intended, on account of the roads, which were bare for the most part from Collins's. My conscience operated even in my extremity, and saved Sprightly many a blow which I would have bestowed without mercy upon Preacher. The house, in spite of Lizzie's eyes, was perfectly dark, and I wheeled about rather comfortless to the tavern, where, after repeated knockings, I roused the landlord. On Saturday morning I took an early

breakfast, and contrived a sideway method of informing Elizabeth of my approach. I followed the messenger very speedily, and found Mr. and Mrs. Dwight, from whom I received the freest and kindest greeting. They both had an intimate remembrance of the olden time, and left me to myself, asking no questions for conscience's sake. The curtain rose, the promised blessing came, and what followed from that time till the clock struck twelve, upon my soul I cannot tell. Without any distinct recollection of what passed, I have a sort of feeling that I would not have added to, nor diminished, a single circumstance. I have spent two days here *in this house*, and I think I could not have been happier, though I should have had more to be grateful for, if you had been present *a part* of the time.

. . If there has been any topic on which I have talked decently, it has been supplied by you, and to every word that I have spoken of you, the response has come from the heart. This precious creature is worthy of your love, to that I commend her, and it is in this way I would seek for her the favor of Heaven. . . . God bless you. C. S.

One or two extracts from his letters to Elizabeth, during their engagement, show how intimately his religious feelings mingled with and elevated his strongest affections and most eager interests.

*Sunday, July 4, 1819.*

DEAREST ELIZABETH :

What should more naturally occur to me, in the commencement of a letter to you on *this* day, than your reason for beginning your last to me on Saturday afternoon? It is undoubtedly true that the services of this day ought to be devoted to the worship of Him in whom we live, and to the cultivation of that purity and charity which alone can fit us for the enjoy-

ments of a better world, but, my love, is it not possible, with a temper of mind acceptable to Him who searcheth the heart, to address on this day some of our thoughts to that being whose love is the kind expression of our Maker's bounty, and at the same time to feel our entire dependence on Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, and our hearts swelling with grateful emotions for the rich mercies which we do not deserve? We must indeed take care that we do not carelessly forget the Providence which renders our lives happy, or lightly regard the power that can make them miserable, that we do humbly and thankfully acknowledge the goodness of our Creator. But if we do this, may we not pour out our hearts to a beloved friend, and be excused even if we want that spirituality which it is at once so desirable and so difficult to attain? For myself I have never much cultivated habits of piety by reflection, nor those of religion by self-denial and scrupulous obedience, but I have rather quieted my conscience by taking advantage of dispositions certainly pliant, if not naturally good, rather directed by example than controlled by authority, and I have really delighted in discharging the obligations imposed by kindness, and in endeavoring, perhaps without much disinterestedness, or sacrifice, or effort, to preserve affection, which has certainly been my chief happiness in life. I do not mean to boast of myself, and to you, nor shall I exult in the possession of that natural good feeling which is the gift of Heaven, which has never been much tried by discouragement or neglect, which most of the circumstances of my life have contributed to strengthen and cherish and reward, and which, most happily, no temptation has been strong enough to subdue or prevent, but you, dearest Elizabeth, will suffer me to rejoice and give thanks that those dispositions are united to those in you which are purer and

.



more tender, that while I have the inclination to be good, I have the very strongest inducements that the world can offer.

*July 17, 1819.*

. . . . . I was about to say something the other day, when I was interrupted, on another subject of your letter, that relating to the sermon of Mr. Channing; but I had not time then, and I am glad of it, for I do not exactly agree with you in feeling on this subject, and it is, and always will be, much more delightful to me to talk to you on the subjects on which we agree, than on those where we may happen to differ; and on this subject the differences and disputes and heart-burnings of some of my dearest friends have made me incline to the opinion that faith, of whatsoever character it may be, should rather be a question between man and his Maker, than a subject for controversy between individuals. All error is undoubtedly pernicious, and truth upon those subjects which relate to our condition in the world to come is of infinite importance, but I have no doubt that the simplest understanding is sufficient for its attainment, when its inquiries are directed to the only source of truth and light and life — the Bible. On this interesting and awful subject so much is said, that we often form our opinions without much reflection or examination, and they are generally confirmed by the biasses of affection or dislike, and we are apt to contend for them with the zeal of those who think that their own characters, and those of the friends whom they venerate and love, are involved in the issue, and this, too, without considering that the same intelligence and the same integrity may produce an infinite diversity of opinions. I have heard in my own family many religious discussions, never one that I recollect without pain and distress; and I tell you sincerely that among

its members who, I think, are bound together with no ordinary affection, that I hardly recollect one where the disposition to be convinced did not yield to the pride of producing conviction.

This letter to his wife during the first year of their marriage, expresses those pure and elevated ideas of the marriage relation which he carried out in his daily life.

You ought to be somewhat happier to be the object of unceasing and increasing affection, for in this world of *limitation*, where the mind so soon perceives the resources of happiness and the depth of them, and where the senses are so often blunted by indulgence, it is no small matter to be assured that there is something in us and about us capable of keeping up the interest we have once created. I could tell you now, Elizabeth, what I have often told you in great sincerity, that I do not think myself worthy of you, but this language does not now seem proper to be used — for without you I am not, and the heart might as well say to the breast that covers it, “you are better than I,” as the husband tell the beloved wife of his bosom that he does not deserve her. When husband and wife are what they *should be to each other*, their faults and their defects seem to be the errors of nature rather than their own, forgotten or forgiven. They are indeed *one* — and I desire to thank my God that we are *one*. I here renew my promise of faithfulness and affection. Accept it, dear Elizabeth, and let me continue to have the inexpressible blessing of your contentment. If you had all the secrets of my soul, they would disclose no waywardness towards you, no coldness, no blight of the heart. Occasional irritation, impatience and rebuke, may sometimes surprise and distress you, but there will surely be enough to counterbalance it all, in my declared confidence, my *tried* affection, my solemn promises, and in that integrity of nature which blends

our highest duties with our eternal hopes. A desire to promote the happiness of another, accompanied by that sort of conduct which shows the desire to be an earnest one, seldom, I believe, falls short of its appropriate gratification. That desire must be felt in such a relation as ours, and most certainly felt in all its force by those who have loved as we have loved, and who do love as we love; and it will show itself not in the easiness and indulgence of a supine disposition, but in those *efforts* to *please* which have reference to the habits, the peculiarities of temper and disposition, which may constitute the natural difference between us, and those peculiar ways which circumstances and habit have made a part of the character, and which, whether the result of mistaken notions, or not, deserve to be consulted, and must be consulted, and will be consulted by those who have in a great measure the keeping of another's heart. If husband and wife may not expect and receive from each other favors and sacrifices and indulgences and allowances and patience and forbearance and forgiveness, where they would have no right to claim it from others, if they are in all respects to be guided and governed by the common rules of intercourse, if they are to keep a sort of debt and credit of duty and kindness, everything exquisite in the relation, everything like that delicious reliance and confidence and dependence which constitutes the *trust* of the soul, is done away, and with it are swept away those sweet consolations which give us repose in the hour of trial and of solitude. I am sensible that the principles I have stated will require much more of you than of me, because you are more reasonable and better tempered; but they must govern us both, and I trust they will, and I trust some years of great and mutual happiness will show it.

How unchanged by his marriage was his feeling toward me let this letter, written in August, 1820, show:

MY DEAR CATHERINE:

I received your very short letter on Saturday. The productions of genius are rapid and simple and complete, and while the common mind, hardly able to trace its own operations, is laboring, by the multitude of its unintelligible associations and far-fetched comparisons, to portray the workings of the heart, to show the extent of its hopes, and to define the limit of its enjoyments, she, by the easy exercise of her magic power, unlocks at once the secrets of happiness. If she speak the language of consolation, it is like the still evening to the quiet conscience; if that of encouragement, it is like the bright morning to those who are wakened in vigor and purity to the duties of the day. In the vocabulary of her affection there are but few names; the regions of her heart, like the creation on which we look, exhibit new images of beauty at every turn, and like that creation, "*glory, glory, glory*" is inscribed on them all. My heart is full of love for you, dear sister, and if this mortal shall ever put on immortality, you will find it so; but whenever I attempt to trace its sentiments on paper, they are like the lines of light on the clouds when the sun is set, the more you examine them, the less are they defined.

Robert was, amongst Charles's brothers, his closest friend and adviser; and many of Charles's letters to him sparkle with his most delightful humor. The two following were written in 1821.

DEAR BROTHER:

I could tell you a funny thing about my being "a religious jester," "a scorner of serious things," "a man who makes a

mock of all religions, and all good people," as reported to Dr. S., and by him related with serious concern to Dr. Pomeroy, but I have not time. I have had a long conversation with Dr. F., who came here and spent about two hours with me. He said he wanted to "talk freely, and not at arm's length." I told him as freely as he pleased, if he would allow me the same privilege, which he cheerfully accorded. I recapitulated all I could remember of Ware, as what I highly approved and delighted in, and concluded by telling him that I certainly did not believe the doctrine of election, as preached in this neighborhood, and I hoped I never should find it in the Bible; for if I did, I should consider it a sufficient reason for not believing that doctrine, whereupon he was grieved in spirit, and retired!

How happens it, Mr. Robert, when I am such a delicate person as to the matter of commissions, that I did not ask you to bring me anything but the bottle of mustard, and my *Edinburgh Review*, that you came off without the latter, or even mentioning the same in your letter from Albany. When you knew that the spirit of revolutions was abroad, France regenerated, the Duke of Wellington upon the point of going to the devil with his tythes, pensions, and civil list, and when you knew, moreover, that the same *Edinburgh Review* contained the very apocalypse in all these matters, the word of prophecy itself at last made sure by the succession of the Broughams, the Denmans and the Greys! Do you suppose, my son, that I live in a corner where the voice of O. P. Q. cannot reach me through the columns of the London *Morning Chronicle*, proclaiming the aspirations and the purpose of liberty, from every dark nook of despotism, the crackling of crowns and coronets in the fires of Antwerp, the fire doomed march of the Cossacks upon the walls

of France all stuck with bayonets? Do you suppose I do not hear the groans of the despots swelling above the thunders of the cannon, within which they attempt to conceal them? No, my son, you mistake. I am in a corner, to be sure, but I cannot forget that I belong to that immense family of man who were born to be happy or to suffer; who have wives and children and brothers and sisters who can weep and rejoice, and who, by the mysterious providence of God, have been subjected to cursed rulers, mad with the lust of power, who have covered them with darkness, and filled the world with crime! I am looking and longing for the regeneration of the people, and I listen to the rumors of revolution as if I heard in every tone of defiance, in every patriot's voice, the voice of God encouraging the nations and proclaiming liberty to the captive.

*God is great.* We shall yet hear, I am confident, his wrath made audible in the dying yells of such wretches as Miguel and Ferdinand, and the members of the Holy Alliance. I wonder where these chaps will meet next! Somebody will have the satisfaction of seeing them in some oyster cellar without money enough to pay the reckoning. They will be among the Goffs and Whaleys of the continent, seeking refuge with chimney sweeps.

Do send me my *Edinburgh*. I do not care so much about the opinions of the editor of the *Berkshire Journal*, or even of the *National Gazette*, as I do about things past now, or the strange things that are passing.

My father seems to have been led into an erroneous estimate of his property, by the very natural mistake of overrating the productive value of his homestead and the real estate attached to it. It had brought to him a princely revenue of happiness. This property and an ample law library were given to Charles. Doubtless my father counted upon his at once realizing a suffi-

cient income from his profession, and he left him no means to maintain the open door hospitality entailed upon him. The erroneous estimate which I have supposed is indicated by his assigning in his will (if I do not much misremember) Charles's inferior advantages of education as a reason for giving him the *largest* share.

I forbear to insert entire an admirable letter, because Charles's expressions of gratitude to my brothers and myself are so disproportioned to our merits in relation to him, and because my heart is wrung with this late knowledge of his struggles, and with the outpouring of his humility and self-disparagement. He thus accounts to Robert for some pecuniary embarrassments during the seven years succeeding my father's death.

In the first place I was the youngest son, brought up in a family where everything was to be had, and was used in profusion; where money, for money's sake, was always, from the highest to the lowest, an object of contempt; in that family, treated with all possible indulgence, pampered and cossetted by everybody, having no responsibility of business, educated without much discipline, or any habits of order, without much reference to any calling or business, I was left to acquire, as an inevitable consequence, the only impulse I should ever gain, a desire to please those whom I loved. I looked, it was natural I should, upon affection as the end of life, or upon everything as useless but as the means to that end. In this state I was when my father died, and the arm of my strength was cut off. Then, I believe, by common consent, a family establishment was kept up, myself at the head of it, comparatively speaking without any means of preserving it from destruction.

This certainly was blindness — injustice on our part. I cannot excuse it. I can only say it was strangely inconsiderate. Deliberately we would not have laid a burden upon him.

Well, then, what was to be done? Yourself, Catherine and Theodore, supplied all supposed deficiency of my means. Shortly after, when I came into business, I felt, in common with you all, a strong desire for the preservation of our household gods. I began to desire, like most of mankind, independence; and when the resources of my business were almost nothing, I felt very unwilling to confess how little they were; very unwilling to abandon my mode of life, very unwilling to call on you farther than you anticipated my wants, and all the while indulged a secret hope that some good fortune would help me out without your aid.

The remainder of the letter is filled with details concerning his small income and very small debts, considering his enforced expenditure and the hard efforts and acute pain it was to him to curb his generous impulses. After his marriage it became absolutely necessary to change his mode of life. His extreme modesty, and nothing else (for he had talent enough, knowledge enough, and uncommon capacity for business), kept him from professional advancement. He had an unconquerable shrinking from speaking in public. He had a charming voice, a beautiful presence, and an affluence of speech in private, but like Cowper, like Washington Irving, he had no utterance in public. So he very gladly accepted the clerkship of the County, an office of no honor, but requiring exactness, industry and fidelity. When he took the office he expected, like his two predecessors in it, to continue his residence in Stockbridge, but he was scrupulous, and after a little time he thought the duties of the office required his continual presence. This, and the necessity of supplying the accumulating expenses of married life, decided him, at whatever cost to his feelings, to break the ties that bound him to his parental home. Having made his decision, he went through all the painful details without betraying to any one but to Robert and myself what the sacrifice made him suffer. His letters to me on the subject no eye but mine ever saw, or ever



will see. And without seeing them, the heroism of his cheerfulness cannot be estimated.

There was one immense blessing attending the transfer of his patrimony. It was made, not to a stranger, but to my brother Theodore and his wife, beloved by us all, and by all held worthy of upholding that sacred roof-tree.

In this connection I insert part of a letter to Robert.

*November 24, 1822.*

DEAR ROBERT:

Your last look at Stockbridge has generally been a last look at me; and so it would have been now, but I had hardly resolution enough to take the last farewell of you and yours in my *only* home. No philosophy can change without suffering the associations that belong to the place of our birth and the friends that were there born to us, and when those associations crowd into our minds, together with all that we love to think upon as true, nature must obey its eternal laws. An abrupt departure and a strange place sometimes mitigates our feelings because it conceals them.

I wished every day to write to you. I wished every day to hear from you. The first was impossible, and it happened well, perhaps, that you did not write sooner. I have parted with Catherine, too. Oh God, is it possible that my home and hers must be forever different! I have always endeavored to avoid selfishness, but the last sacrifice has cost me pangs that no earthly being knows of, or can know. She has been my second mother.

I thank you, dear brother, for your letter, and I thank dear Elizabeth, too, for hers. May God forever bless you both.

Through the winter of 1822 and 1823, my brother had lodgings at a Mr. Whiting's, in Lenox. There, with his wife and

two eldest children (they were both born in our Stockbridge home), he was very happy. He knew my love and anxiety for his eldest girl, and he patiently filled his letters with nursery details. "She goes to bed," he writes, "at seven o'clock; always asking permission to sit up a little longer, and takes the refusal as sweetly and submissively as if she were born on purpose to disprove the main doctrines of infernalism. Considering her age, she is (to me) the sweetest of all human beings. She never passes a day without some remembrance or pretty saying of aunt Kitty. We sometimes help her to this, for it is, and it is to be, one of my chief cares that she loves you, and becomes like you."

The following passage, from a letter written about this time, relates to a young girl in my service whom I had left in my brother's care. It evinces how thoughtful and tender that care was.

She goes out hardly at all, brings in no wood, and hardly ever any water; sleeps in a warm room over the kitchen, where Miss —— has also a bed. She goes to bed generally about nine, always before ten, rises about seven. I found, after we took Kit away from her, that she wanted scissors put over her window, and laid awake; and as I did not choose to begin her education, I got a berth for her aloft, where cows, hogs, horses and other ghosts would not be apt to disturb her.

This girl, the loveliest, most refined and affectionate of serving women, married after living with me eleven years. Her sad story was a subject for Tennyson. My brother never lost sight of her, never took his protecting hand from her, but by looking into her husband's concerns, by his countenance, by his advice, by lending him money, by every means that could sustain an inefficient man, he tried to get him on in the world. His letters to me abound in notices of this girl, my gentle friend more than servant.

The following letters are all characteristic.

To his wife, who had just lost a very dear brother.

*Lenox, June 15, 1822.*

MY DEAR ELIZABETH :

I received your letter yesterday with the greatest pleasure. . . . If God in his wisdom sees fit to protract our lives, I trust I shall be made better and happier forever by our connection. If either of them is shortly to terminate, I cannot lose the benefit of the heavenly gift bestowed upon me. . . . What effect has it, what effect ought it not to have upon us, to hear the just and sincere praises of the chosen and cherished objects of our heart's purest love? They fall sweetly upon the ear, and they sink deeply into the breast on those occasions when we are led to acknowledge our dependence on Providence, and to refer to Him those blessings which make this life desirable, and that which is to come the subject of earnest, inexpressible hope. Even amidst the tumult of sudden and almost overwhelming calamity, we are quieted by the assurance of a better life prepared for those who do the will of their Heavenly Father. When the awful agitations of grief for the loss of a dear friend have subsided, when the chill of despondency has left the heart, and light breaks in upon the darkness of the grave, what poor creature is there so ignorant, so wretched, that he does not look upon this life as the commencement of his being, that does not consider the admonition in mercy sent to him to "purify himself," that does not strive to be better, that does not feel, in some degree, delivered from temptation, in short, that does not feel the power of God upon his heart, teaching him to set a just value on his worldly possessions, giving him patience in tribulation, and aiding him by every motive of affection, gratitude and religion, in preparation for durable happiness. . . . Oh, my dear little child! Kiss her, and kiss

the baby for me. Give my love to our dear mother. . . .  
If your mother desires you to stay perhaps you had better. I thought you would increase too much her fatigues. I am very anxious to see you, but so I always am and always shall be, when you are gone. Write me if you can by every mail.

Your most affectionate,

CHARLES SEDGWICK.

To myself in New York.

*Lenox, March 15, 1823.*

MY DEAR SISTER:

Your letter to Kitty I have read attentively, and I hope with profit. Upon the subject of trusting and distrusting Providence I have thought a good deal, and with some anxiety, for I would not willingly be guilty of ingratitude to that good Being who has given me my children.

Kitty's occasional sicknesses, and her liability to the disease with which she has been attacked, I confess have occupied my mind almost incessantly this winter; and the vigilance with which I have watched her has been painful, because, in spite of myself, accompanied with fear, for I have considered not only her life in danger, but her constitution and temper, through the means necessary to preserve it. If by some evil which neither prudence nor experience would enable me to guard against, I should be deprived of either or both of my children, I should look upon the event as ordered by Providence and directed by His wisdom, and as well as I can understand myself, I should bear it as well as most people, for in that case I should fear to offend. But the ordinary operations of Providence are so blended with our own actions, events by His eternal laws depend so much upon our own conduct, even life and health, by his constitution of things, that it is difficult to understand

precisely the degree of care we should give to their preservation. According to my observation, it is not a strange thing for some people to make a merit of resignation, or at least to content themselves with the exercise of this pious affection, when self-reproach, one would think, would be more natural and just, when they are visited with the true and proper consequence of some culpable excess. When the prudence we ought always to have exercised would have saved us from the calamity we suffer from, we have cause for submission, but not for quietness; and how great a proportion of the evils we endure might be prevented by caution, activity and judgment! We have, I know, other duties to perform, besides those we owe to our children, but none that can be neglected with less impunity. . . . It is harder sometimes to ascertain our duty than to do it. When the nature of our business furnishes great opportunities of leisure, the mind clings to some of its interests with a devotedness which insensibly becomes habitual, our feelings become contracted, and our judgment obscured by intense application to the objects of its paramount affection and desire. Natural constitution imparts with some force to everybody a predominant passion. Time and accident may modify or control it. The proud man may estimate himself more justly and demean himself more modestly in the presence of those who are superior to him in knowledge and virtue, but his lip will always slightly curl. The vain man may be touched by grief and softened by calamity, but the sound of praise, in any extremity, will tingle in his ears; avarice survives the loss of friends. So it is with other passions. At first we are so slightly actuated by them that they are hardly perceived. If they are not instinctive, they become so interwoven with our natures by cultivation that they may be said to be a part of them. With

those above enumerated I am not beset. The love of my kindred surpasses them all in its influence over me, as you know, and circumstances have been no less powerful than the principle itself in their effect upon me. Dependent as I am upon the pleasures of affection, and beholding in my children that germ of life whose natural fruit is "love, joy, peace," is it wonderful, is it even strange, shall I not be forgiven, if I fear the canker that may nip its earthly bud before it is transplanted into the garden of God?

To his brother Robert.

*Lenox, March 31, 1823.*

MY DEAR BROTHER:

I have never said less or thought more of my friends than I have this winter. As I advance in life, my relation to my family seems to increase in importance, for their character and their affection is the birthright of my children; it is that that I think of when sickness and change remind me of my mortality. Health has so long reigned in our house, and the happiness of our intercourse has been so great and uninterrupted, that I know not how we should bear the severing of one of our number. When that event shall happen, which it must, sooner or later, I hope and trust that the purity and strength of our affection will give us all reason to hope for a re-union in a better world.

The season is approaching which makes me feel the privation of my home at Stockbridge too sensibly, for it was the delight of that place that we all met together there. But no matter, this is all right; those will be there who will make us all welcome.

My brother was one of the wisest men I ever knew in regard to the treatment of the affections; wise in his theories concerning them as he was perfect in their exercise.

In a letter to Robert, writing of one of our dear relatives, he says: "I endeavor to study the balance of character in others as well as in myself, and to make all manner of allowance for idiosyncrasies, but after all they sometimes vex me beyond measure.

"It is very desirable to find out all the points of sympathy between yourself and a friend, and to cultivate them, so far as they strengthen the bonds of love, and it is equally well to let peculiarities alone that you do not like, where they make a part of the grain of the character, and are confirmed by habit, for if you dwell upon them they always irritate, and sometimes alienate. I find this necessary in regard to ——."

To his brother Robert.

*Lenox, July 18, 1823.*

You do not know, dear brother, how the importance of your letters and of Kate's visits is magnified by my residence here. Here men's hearts are like uninhabited islands; we know that both exist in the wide creation, but neither our souls nor our bodies receive support or pleasure from either source.

When my wife and children are well I am well, and for the most part happy; but if either of them is beset by sickness, I feel an absolute longing for one breath of human feeling. I should almost die if it were not for our dear sister. She is a ministering spirit, breathing the air of Heaven upon us. Our poor little boy (Charles) has been very unwell for several days. He is a sweet and beautiful boy, and I earnestly pray that God may preserve his life as an instrument of my happiness and virtue. . . . The house (at Stockbridge) is in beautiful order, and I am sure you will find great pleasure in going there.

I am sure the whole family will be benefitted by Theodore's location in Stockbridge, and I rejoice in it. It is very hard for me to part with the place, but I am satisfied it was right, and I am perfectly resolved that the decision shall neither trouble me nor annoy my friends on my account.

The following letter to Robert relates to Egbert Pomeroy, the third son of my sister Eliza, who died at the age of twenty-five. He deserved all my brother said of him. He survived a long, suffering voyage from Marseilles but three days, but long enough to leave an ineffaceable impression of the remarkable and lovely qualities of his character, "strong in death."

*Lenox, July 29, 1825.*

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Since we met, our dear Egbert has been restored to his friends, and taken from them, not, I think, as we were accustomed to say, forever, but for a short time, as we all trust to a better condition than the happiest of us can enjoy here. His sufferings must have been extreme, and cannot be thought of without shuddering; but there was so much of joy in the attainment of his last earthly desire, such peace, composure and magnanimity of spirit, such a beautiful example of fidelity, fortitude, patience and tenderness in the closing scenes of life, so much seriousness without despondency, such confidence without presumption, in short, so much of everything that becomes the mind of a moral and immortal being, that I have hardly felt any sentiment but one of pure gratitude since his departure. He has certainly been cut off from bright prospects of happiness here, perhaps from uncommon usefulness. We cannot estimate the effect of a change upon him, of the nature of which we are so entirely ignorant, but we have reason enough to believe that he has carried with him his capacities of happiness and of use-



fulness too, that they are capable of great enlargement, and that they are free from the temptations and obstacles that beset us here.

Let us make the only use that remains of the relation that has subsisted between us, which is now terminated, correct every fault that corrupts our natures, and cultivate humility and earnestness, every virtue that can endure forever. I was at Stockbridge last night, and staid at Eliza's. Nothing can be more elevating than her example, nothing more beautiful. She feels the stroke, and feels it deeply, and so do they all; but she has a sublime religion, and it cannot deceive her.

To Mrs. Pomeroy.<sup>1</sup>

1825.

MY DEAR SISTER ELIZA:

I do not know how I should have forgotten to ask you to send to George, by Harry, the memoir which I read yesterday. Of all that our dear sister has done for us, and surely no human being could do more, I do not know anything that should be remembered with more gratitude and praise to God. Some of her words still strike upon my ear as if an angel uttered them, and they sink into my heart as if that angel were commissioned by God himself. The memoir of Egbert is *true*, and it is presented to the mind in such a way that I feel almost sure (notwithstanding our weak and feeble purposes) that it will produce in some way eternal benefit. May God grant to us all such a sense of the happiness of being allied to this extraordinary sister, as can only come from the virtuous improvement of the blessing. May everlasting happiness beam upon her soul from our redeemed spirits!

Your most affectionate

CHAS. SEDGWICK.

<sup>1</sup> This letter was not inserted by Miss Sedgwick. K. S. M.

To his wife.

*Lenox, Oct. 3, 1825.*

MY DEAR WIFE :

. . . . . The night after you left me, if I had been inclined to superstition, would have made me nervous ; for the first and only relic I saw of my once happy condition was Charlie's horse tied up by the head in the chimney corner, and the poor dumb beastie was so forlorn that he would neither look at me nor show any sign of recognition. I stroked him, but to no purpose, and I would have sent him to receive the benediction of St. Anthony, if I had been a Catholic. I was truly miserable, and I am sure, if you have ever doubted my affection, your confidence in me would be fully restored by knowing the frame of my mind in my hours of solitude. But enough of this. My infirmities are great, but my disposition towards you is as true and good as can be towards a human being here below.

To his wife.

*October 4, 1825.*

I asked Kitty last night what she should do when her aunt was gone. She replied, characteristically, that in the first place she should be sorry, in the second place cry, in the third place get her lesson and sew some, in the fourth place *laugh*, and in the fifth place go to dinner or supper, she could not tell which. Kitty is as well as ever, as good and as happy. If this child is spared to us, and we should live, it will be an everlasting disgrace to us if she has not as good a temper as this world admits of. Charley is a more difficult subject ; he has a burning impatience, whether a vice or misfortune I cannot tell, and, whether directed to good or bad objects, it will subject him to

many a trial. He is true in his affections, and so ardent that he will not be likely to be vicious, but he must be disciplined to repress his vehement desires. If he can be broken into regular pursuits and orderly habits, he will be a prince of a fellow. I cherish his horse, though he is a sorry looking fellow, with something like the pious feeling we have in possessing a relic of a departed friend. I hope he speaks of me whenever he wakes up, and that you *hear* him, but I have some fear that "Charley, lie still," will be so often repeated to him, that his good habits in this respect will be broken up. Mumbet is with us, and it is really delightful to be able to contribute so much to anybody's pleasure, especially those to whom we owe so much. She is as happy as a child, and the Congress water and good tea make her head as "clear as a bell." She will stay the week out, and we must have another visit from her if possible this fall. She seems to be very sorry that you are from home. Everybody that comes to see *me* (except Mumbet) I believe considers it duty work in your absence, so that the very pleasures I resort to as a substitute in your absence, are but half enjoyed. I hope you are enjoying your visit to the utmost. Nothing else could satisfy me when you are gone. I have seen no ghosts, which I wonder at a little, seeing they have had such fitting opportunity and such ample space in my solitary chamber.

Sister Catherine is well, and delightful at all times, and especially now.

Forget me not. Love to all. Forty thousand kisses to my dear boy.

Your most affectionate

CHAS. SEDGWICK.

Kit says she made a short letter for you in bed last night, "pretty beautiful," and she shall certainly write.

After a delightful family excursion to Northampton, Charles wrote the following letter to Robert.

*Lenox, Aug. 3, 1826.*

There is a most terrible awakening there, and though one may get a little occasional relief by laughing at the absurd follies which it produces, it is certainly most melancholy to see so many minds that might, and should be bright, useful and happy, subjected to this fanatical, useless, and generally vicious bondage. In the case of a solitary individual, or even a few who are occasionally brought into the folds of orthodoxy by the ordinary process of conviction and conversion, the evil is hardly perceived, and perhaps does not exist at all; for the faith is then reduced to an abstract theory, and an intercourse with other minds may preserve the cheerfulness of the temper, and keep up the operations of charity which is rather an instinct than a principle, in most minds. But in circumstances like those at present in Northampton; when an awakening is got up with so much study and management, when the whole society is divided into small classes in the hands of inquisitorial and spiritual keepers, where the cunning lovers of influence, the newly born among the reprobates, and the habitually good and pious, and the aged and the dying join heart and hand in sounding the dreadful note of preparation, rousing the weary and half refreshed from their unfinished slumbers by the ringing of bells at daylight, cutting them off at once and entirely from all their pursuits of business or pleasure, calling them to an account as solemn as the judgment, representing in the most frightful colors that the imagination can portray, the consequences of a state of things which no individual had any agency in producing, and which no human power can by any means avert; alarming the young and the ignorant with the

dread of punishment from a Being who is alike in power and wrath, and thrusting into the minds of the timid, the scrupulous and superstitious, something worse than any definable evil, the cursed demon of a mysterious fear, exclaiming in solemn harmony, "The time is at hand — Come, ye blessed — depart, ye wicked, into everlasting fire — flee from the wrath to come — all things are now ready — now, and now only, is the accepted time — now is the day of salvation — resist not the Spirit, and thus commit the unpardonable sin!"

How is it possible that one in his sober senses, who has a particle of benevolent feeling, can witness such a state of things as this without feeling pain and distress from the misery it is likely to produce, and when he sees among the victims of such a religion friends who are dear to him, who look upon him with no better feeling than compassion, who might be persuaded, perhaps, to go with him through the journey of life, and part with him at last just as he was embarking for the gulph of fire, shouting hosannas to the glory of that Being who, by plucking them as brands from the burning, had severed the chords of nature, and even put to scorn all the ties of blood and kindred!

When this religion breaks out in a considerable place and affects a large portion of the population, a line of separation is drawn between brothers and sisters, parents and children. There is no sympathy upon the most interesting of all subjects; they soon get to feel little upon any, and when the faith has its fair and full operation upon the mind (which, thank Heaven, is seldom the case), it produces estrangement and alienation. How can it be otherwise, when the most perverted feelings are sanctioned by the very religion which classes all who embrace it among the special objects of God's favor, and all who do not as the *meet* subjects of hell fire, and *reserved* — *reserved* unto death, to the judgment of the great day!

Love, as I said before, is an instinct; the look of the eye, the tone of the voice, the pressure of the hand, may call it forth, and it is not in the power of any superstition to subdue it altogether, but where it has not been cultivated into a habit, or strengthened by circumstances, how easily may it be turned from its natural objects where there is no sympathy, no confidence, no mutual interest, no common hopes or principles. I thank God that my wife has not been born again into a kingdom built upon the ruins of natural feelings and affections.

You will, perhaps, be surprised that I am so warm on this subject, and talk so much like an "opposer." I did not think of saying one word when I began my letter, but you have no idea of the horrible extent of the mania in Northampton. It is a perpetual camp meeting, and quite as bad. President —— said the other day, in an exhortation to the people to be up and doing, that more could be done now in the great cause in the course of one month, than could be done, if this season was neglected, *for ages!* Jesus Christ was at that moment going about Northampton from street to street, and from house to house. "Go on," he said, "for every *stroke* now will tell," etc.

A little girl going along shop row, stopped at the door of one of the merchants and cried out, "*What are you doing?* Why don't you flee from the wrath to come?" Another said — but I will not repeat this ridiculous stuff. God grant that the blue laws and the laws against witches be not again enacted.

Give my love to your wife and to Harry, and do let me know when you expect to be here.

Elizabeth is quite smart, but not well yet. She sends her best love to you. She is not orthodox in any thing but her duties as a wife and mother. In them she is as nearly perfect as the lot of humanity admits, and I am fully confident that

whatever may become of us at last, we shall not be separated here through the instrumentality of priests, deacons, bells or psalm books.

Yours most affectionately,

CHS. SEDGWICK.

*January 1, 1827.*

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have been so hard at work to-day, and it is now so late (twenty-five minutes past four) that I should not begin a letter to you, but that it is New Year's day. And now let me wish you, not for form's sake, but in sincerity and truth, every pleasant thought that attends the good in reviewing the past, and every pleasure for the future that can abide the scrutiny of truth and conscience.

If I could, dear sister, I would surround you with airs that should breath nothing but health, friends who should always love, thoughts from which you should never wish to turn away, and in the night season with those bright visions which, piercing through the clouds of earthly care and sorrow, should behold ministering spirits, ministering to those who are the heirs of salvation. But not to indulge myself in the foolish fancies of romantic feeling, I can with all gratitude and soberness rejoice with you on the many unmerited blessings which we have partaken together, which our family as such, *through* you and with you, enjoy in common, in such great exemption from sickness and death, in such health and prosperity, and for the most part in such honor and mutual affection. Surely from us is required no common return for the advantages we have received. Our virtue ought not to be measured by any common standard of morality. Our union should not be one of affection merely, but of considerate, scrupulous, active goodness. To me it appears that the defects which are commonly called the vices of human

conduct (temper is a different affair), as often result from ignorance as from the want of inclination to do that which is manifestly our duty, from the condition and circumstances of the individual, from partial views, from the want of judgment to assign to different objects their proportionate value, rather than from bad motives or bad character.

How often does the extreme prudence of the anxious and timid degenerate into the most unconscious parsimony; how often does the miserable slavery of the appetites result from the want of that delicate and refined intercourse, which at the same time stimulates the intellect and chastens the sources of pleasure; how often are trick and cunning and selfishness and treachery the natural fruit of poverty and cruel dependence; and even tyranny, that most odious feature of mortal man, may sometimes be thought a necessary expedient to prevent confusion and fatal disorders. God grant, for conscience' sake, that it may be so in the instance of poor Bolivar. I am not yet willing to believe that he has forever degraded his noble intellect for a paltry ambition.

The vices of others are so far from increasing my self-complacency, that I declare I hardly ever see a poor wretch who is the victim of any of them, that I do not feel something like fear and trembling to think of the account that I must render of a life so free from temptation, so surrounded with love, so full of the common blessings of Providence, and so utterly fruitless. *I have sometimes thought that what has been my misery in this world will be my only final consolation—the possession of the one talent.*

But I have digressed, and like to have forgotten the object of my sermon. I will not now protract it, but merely ask, and in this particular I would avail myself of the privilege of the preacher, whose discourse is designed exclusively for his hearers



and not at all for himself, whether the most gifted and the most happy members of our family are themselves satisfied with their works of charity. Heaven forbid that I should go beyond their consciences, or try to enlighten them. Their generosity has grown into a proverb (*at least in the family*), but it is more blessed to give than to receive. Their sentiments are pure and elevated, but heavens, what a pleasure it is to have drunk at the pure fountain of truth and knowledge! They love truth and justice, but truth and justice bring them instant and eternal reward. They cultivate the society of the wise and good, but where is the limit to the pleasure of an intellectual feast? Have they sufficient acquaintance with the poor and the miserable? with the less favored among their own connexions? Would they willingly give up the pleasure of the *lunch* to save a poor wretch from vice he knows not how to avoid? I would not impute to them pride, for I know they have it not in any bad sense, but I would impart to them grace enough to visit and take by the hand whenever opportunity offers, and even to make an opportunity that they may take by the hand those who can neither give information nor pleasure, who are kept down by the inferiority of their condition, and for whom a little sympathy and a little knowledge will do infinitely more than any hand of charity when the countenance and voice are turned away.

For yourself it appears to me that your path of duty is plain enough — write, nothing but write — neither shall I preach to Jenny. She has improved every good sermon from her youth up, and thrown all the bad away. So with Eliza. Thus you will perceive that in one respect my short sermon is better than most others, for nobody can hand it over to his neighbor to make the application. I suppose the answer to it will be that which a famous doctor received recently, "We are too busy, sir."

Do you know that I have not heard a word from New York since I came home. I suppose you have taken it in dudgeon that I have not written, but this you ought never to do, dear Kate, knowing that my poor eyes after my necessary writing, which is enough to stultify me, hardly give me reading sufficient to enable me to remember my letters (the 24, I mean).

When you have read this letter you will probably be glad that I have not written it before. In fact I have had nothing in particular to say more than George Fitch was always repeating, "I love you. I love you." I have done nothing since I came home of greater consequence than musing while the fire burned, and eating oysters, of which Harry gave us something more than a two years' stock!

The children, I think, are improving. I cannot but hope that Kitty will make herself worthy of your partiality. Bessy is becoming quite pretty, and as sweet as a rose. I have been greatly delighted within a few days by some proofs of mind Charley has given in his arithmetic; he will turn out brighter than I supposed.

*Lenox, February 4, 1828.*

MY DEAR ROBERT :

Last summer Mr. Howe<sup>1</sup> came to Stockbridge for the purpose of doing something for Harry. At that time there was nothing to clog his own path, and there was before him, to all human seeming, a long and bright track of usefulness; now he is numbered with the dead, and our poor brother evidently envies his condition. If we could see what that condition is, it would not, to be sure, be a cause for envy, but the happiest amongst us might long to partake of his happiness. It is difficult to be reconciled to his death, for he was cut off in the

<sup>1</sup> Judge Howe, of Northampton.

prime and vigor of his faculties, and there was certainly no man whose whole character and conduct was a source of more unqualified delight to his friends. His character was so admirably proportioned, his friendship was so pure and warm, his temper was so sweet, and in the midst of study and business to which he was so completely devoted, he had such a bright, cheerful, and social spirit, that light and joy followed him everywhere. I cannot describe the feeling that came over me when I heard of his death.

The news was a dreadful shock to me. It seemed to produce but one feeling, that of loss; to suspend entirely the powers by which, in the most trying circumstances, we can measure with some accuracy the extent of the blessings that are left to us. Mr. Howe had been so much with me, I knew him so thoroughly, he was so faithful, so kind, I had calculated on the advantages of his society and friendship so securely as a blessing to my children, that it was terrible to give him up. Still I do not look upon his life as a short one, and I am very, very thankful that I was permitted to enjoy him so much, and that I have so much to remember and look back upon with delight; and then his beautiful death, and the joy that must follow it — but enough. God grant that this severe affliction may carry our thoughts and our affections more frequently to Him who, in the darkest hour, with the hand that circumscribes our earthly possessions, thus touches the springs of our immortal hopes.

To his brother Robert.

*April 12, 1829.*

You will excuse me for not attaching much weight to your declarations about leisure. I cannot do it without mingling a spice of Calvinism with my composition, and giving up my principles of belief, one of which is, that in certain matters, such

as the revolutions of the seasons, the time of the sun's rising and setting, the cold of high mountains, and your being at leisure, experience is the sure, as well as the only, guide. I have so often spent hours in your office, in your periods of *leisure*, waiting for a chance to speak a word, that I am inclined, out of curiosity, to go for once to New York when you are engaged, in order to see the effect of business on the social qualities of my most affectionate brother. Besides, as I have just learned that I have only seen you in your idle moments, I should like to know how you look and act when you are busy!

My brother Harry transferred his residence to Stockbridge, driven from his profession by his impaired eyesight, and by long protracted illness of body and dejection of mind. Charles writes as follows, in anticipation of his coming:

The coming week I shall be obliged to devote principally to Jane. Her genius, which makes her such an infallible judge of what is beautiful and becoming when it is presented to the eye of the mind or the body, has either leapt over some of the elementary processes of art, or has not been very observant of the steps by which the rocks and trees have been converted into gardens. She has a general idea of the value of money, and a tolerably distinct one of a large and convenient house, but she is utterly ignorant how many feet of ground a large house will cover, how it must be divided to make it "convenient," and how many dollars it will cost to make it either the one or the other. She knows it is necessary to hire a mason and a carpenter, and to pay them; that one works in wood and the other in mortar; but she takes it for granted (from having lived in cities, I suppose) that when they are told to come, the mortar and the wood will come with them, of course. As the major is given to politics, philosophy and railroads, and only deals in

lime and stone at present by the hundred tons, I can't think of asking him to meddle with such a trifling affair, and the doctor has so much rubbish of his own to clear away that it seems hardly fair to enlist him against a foreign enemy, and as I am a man of leisure, and rather handy in out door business, which requires neither head nor heart to execute, it seems properly to fall upon me to stop the wind away from dear Jennie's new dwelling, and let in the light of the sun there upon everything that it can be pleasant for her to look upon. Poor Whitney, whose dimensions should have given him at least one idea, that of gravitation, was rather ignorant of the art of building, and being somewhat of a philosopher, adopted a new theory upon the subject which you may call the "planetary system" of building. He began his house at the top; he brought it all down, except the chimneys, to the ground; he left them midway between heaven and earth. As he has been unhappily consigned to the latter, and has left no memorandum how he designed the improvement to be used, we are obliged to go back to the old mode of a regular foundation. Besides this, there are many other things to do, as you may well conceive, to make the house either habitable or pleasant.

- The letters which I have selected to illustrate the next few years of my brother's life, years of uninterrupted domestic tranquillity and happiness, I give with no attempt at any special arrangement or connection.

To his wife, who was staying at Mr. Minot's, in Boston.

*Lenox, May 27, 1829.*

MY DEAR ELIZABETH:

. . . . . I have written to you a letter that has really troubled you. I did not mean it. If I ever get the new body that Paul promises, I hope and trust it will be disen-

cumbered of the innumerable saws and rasps and files that are so often set to work on my tenderest nerves, as if so many devils held the handles whenever an unlucky accident occurs. . . . Do not lay up anything against me; my own reproaches are as much as I can endure, and the only consolation I have is in believing that you know my heart and can safely trust it; that you know my infirmities, that you pity and do not resent them. Good Heavens! If I were to write a quire of paper over, I could not put down one half of those things which, through my alliance with you, which I esteem *the blessing* of my life, are subjects of joy, gratitude and praise. The past, the present and the future of my life with you, give to my memory, consciousness and hopes, everything almost from which I experience pleasure, hardly anything of evil that is not either created or greatly aggravated by my own wrongs, weakness and sense of ill-desert. . . . You are never gone from me that I do not feel in some measure lost or uneasy, never that the time does not seem everlastingly long, and even now it seems to me as if you had been absent long enough to go round the world. But do not let me cut short your visit; get everything you can of pleasure out of it, unless you find that by protracting these pleasures, those that you left behind are growing less and less important, in which case I beseech you to deny yourself. . . . When you have determined to return, let me know, but do not stay beyond the day you fix. Give my love to all, and believe me your most affectionate husband, for this is true if there is truth in me.

C. SEDGWICK.

To his wife.

*Lenox, May 31, 1829.*

. . . . . Miss Sarah<sup>1</sup> began yesterday to inoculate her children with the virus of the Westminster Catechism. It is now, I presume, perfectly understood that Calvinism is not likely to be taken the natural way. Bessie came from school, and with a sort of innate heresy began to dance upon the Saybrook platform with great glee. Mary told me an anecdote that is quite too good to be lost. Bessie saw Isaac from the window shearing sheep, standing on his feet with his head down, his back towards her. Julia asked her what it was; she replied instantly, "chief end of man."

To his wife.

*Lenox, June 8, 1829.*

. . . . . Your friend L. M. is no more. You know his spiritual zeal. He was on a missionary tour at Richmond, or New Canaan, trying to rouse the slumbering from their carnal security. It so happened that the adversary assailed him, and in an evil hour, when the flesh was lusting against the spirit, tempted him with a pot of pork and beans, or some other luxury equally irresistible, and the result was an apoplexy. This, I suppose, his friends in the church will call the triumph of faith, inasmuch as the body yielded in the warfare between the two natures.

To his wife.

*Stockbridge, June 11, 1829.*

DEAR E.:

I received a letter from you on Wednesday of last week. Heaven bless you for one which I got last evening, of the 5th.  
 . . . . Jane showed me, on Tuesday, a delightful letter from

<sup>1</sup> The schoolmistress.

Mrs. Minot, which was particularly interesting from her account of you, and which, like everything else that brings her mind and heart before me, increased my admiration and gratitude. Everybody here is delighted with your happiness in Boston, and everybody wants to see you; not quite so much as I do, but sincerely, and a good deal. . . . Jane and Sue Pomeroy staid at Lenox last night. Jane bears, pretty much as she has done, one of the sorest trials that a person on this earth can experience,<sup>1</sup> and the same sweetness, patience and cheerfulness she always manifests to her friends, as if she thought it a crime to diminish in any way the sum total of happiness; but there is a silent and secret wearing of her spirit which is nevertheless at all times apparent, and which sometimes shows itself in the most visible signs of deep distress. How can it be otherwise? Let us be thankful, dear E., in the midst of this unspeakable affliction, that we have so much to enjoy, and that we are so happy. I had a most sweet letter from dear Kitty, doubly dear as the evidence of her own mind, and a fresh presentation of yours. . . . I intend, Providence willing, to meet you on Monday, when I will endeavor to satisfy you that I have performed a hard, if not a high, duty in suppressing the strongest of my present earthly desires, that of meeting you again as soon as possible, and not attempting to shorten your visit. Please give my love to Mrs. Minot, and tell her that if Divine Providence, in his goodness, ever reveals to me the way in which I can add an item to her large account of happiness, I think I shall do it promptly.

<sup>1</sup> Her husband, blind and incurably insane, had been recently placed in an asylum.



To his brother Robert, on receiving from him the gift of a watch, February, 1830.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

. . . . . I am as much embarrassed by this circumstance as Jackson was by that mischievous provision of the Constitution, when he received his medal from Bolivar, which I doubt not he surrendered to Congress with some secret gnashing of the teeth. Thank Heaven, however, I have no scruples on the subject. I am most happy to find myself in such a situation as a private citizen, that I cannot be molested in the enjoyment of my *temporal* privileges by any interpretation, either of the Constitution or the law of Moses. I therefore accept with the greatest pleasure the superb watch which you sent me with a delicacy which makes everything doubly acceptable, and which, I believe, I shall best praise by observing due moderation in my thanks. I cannot, however, refrain from saying that the watch brings me precisely that personal gratification that I should have sought for myself if I had had the money to spare for it, and is in form, substance, *color* and character, what I should have chosen for myself among a thousand. It is, I believe, *perfect*, and so was the letter accompanying the same, with one exception — I should have been contented with the time it carries, without any allusion to eternity. My bald head, the physical appearance of my children, and several other things, remind me sufficiently of my own winding up, and as to the breaking of your main spring, the thought of it is shocking. Long, long may it be, dear Robert, before this shall happen; in the mean time may God keep you with all true honor and happiness, and when it does come, transmit through your children and your children's children to the latest posterity, your pure blood, good name and noble deeds.

To me.

*Lenox, June 21, 1830.*

. . . . . You must not write any more novels; my family will be ruined. My wife has forsaken the safe and straight paths of her fathers, and is plunged in the mire of heresy. You would have been shocked to see her retire to her room yesterday (Sunday morning), and there remain till she had read to the last chapter of the last book of "Clarence." From pure delicacy to her, that I might have a chance to win her back again without opposing the fatal barrier of a more rigid and virtuous example, I seemed to approve this abominable outrage, and to prove my self-denial, I exposed myself to the judgment of sore eyes, and actually read to page fifty in the second volume. The girls were shut up in their own room, and not a sound that I heard issued from thence till four o'clock, P.M., when there was one burst of laughter. My wife was quite shocked by the interruption, being nearly at the end of the last chapter; and as soon as she had finished it, declared that the girls must not carry on so, and immediately proceeded with three or four Bibles and pious books, to expound to them the way more perfectly, and bring them up in the way they should go. Her mind was evidently solemnized by "Clarence," and though at first it seemed to me quite an awful way of spending the Sabbath, I have concluded to govern myself in this, as in all other cases, by my experience, and to recommend "Clarence" as a Sunday book. As it respects myself, I do not as yet perceive the slightest injury from it. I slept well, had no bad dreams, got up without minling the weather, though the water was six inches on a level, rain pouring like guns, the clouds within a foot of your head, and four hundred cubic feet thick, scolded at nobody for leaving my horse in the pasture, where I put him a fortnight ago, ate a good breakfast, tho gh

there was nothing but hot bread to be got, have written a half dozen letters since breakfast, and am now dispatching one more, in order to send H.'s letters as I promised. But I must conclude, with love to Kitty and all, and finish the rest of the book, for I have work to do to-day.

Yours affectionately, C. S.

To his wife.

*Newport, August 24, 1831.*

MY DEAR ELIZABETH:

I have had every pleasure I expected when I left home, and some that I did not expect, except that of hearing from you and from home. This is a pleasure important and necessary to all the others, and it is so much of course for me to expect and receive it, that I feel under every disappointment somewhat like a man suddenly gagged, whose lungs have had their full swell in the pure atmosphere. If I do not hear from you to-day I shall be positively uncomfortable. "Charles! a letter!" This sound I heard as I was writing, and your letter was put into my hands, and it has put me into such good spirits that everything seems alike to me, as it did to Crabbe's lover, at a particular stage of his journey. Heaven be praised that you are all well, Kitty, Charlie, Bessie and the mariner,<sup>1</sup> and the girls. I could well spare Fido, the cat and the parrot. I am sorely grieved to hear that my darling's eyes are no better. You do not know, nor does she, how much I think of them; how anxious I am that in body, soul, spirit, temper, everything, she should be perfect, an example and pattern, the likeness of yourself, perfected and preserved for the rest of my children. As soon as possible after I get home, you and the mariner, and Kitty, must go to Dr. Flint. I cannot risk those eyes another

<sup>1</sup> His son William, then a baby.

moment if I can help it. Only think of the consequences, and now, perhaps, is the time, the golden moment which may be seized or lost forever. These eyes, these eyes! Dear Charlie! he is a good boy; he will be a gentleman, a scholar, my man of business, my *trusty friend*, who will make my journeys pleasant and free from care, and my home thrice pleasant. Dear Bessie, too, how often the sweet sprite dances before me! sweet, affectionate. O, that I could put my visible eye upon her, upon the mariner, upon you, Sarah, Laura, Mary,<sup>1</sup> *all!* but I can say no more of home at present, or you will not be glad to get my letter. Only one word for Sarah and Laura — my shirts, the only neat thing in my wardrobe, are the admiration of Newport. Robert was so mortified to wear his own after seeing them, he declared his should be washed over again. I left New York Thursday, at five, P.M. The weather, which had been very hot, was sweet and refreshing on the water. I took my station between the ropes on the bowsprit of the "Boston," reclined upon a roll of canvass, looked at the beautiful shores of New York, Connecticut and Long Island, by a clear and beautiful sunset and moon rising, opened my breast to the soft southwest, and gave myself up to sensation and the remembrance of home. The evening we passed with Mr. Quincy, the President, who was returning from Quebec with his youngest son. At seven, on Friday morning, we reached Newport. I was called up at a quarter before five to enjoy the rolling sea around Point Judith, but in this I was sadly disappointed. The heavens were clear and calm, and everything was beautiful; but the sea was smooth, and the vessel moved as quietly as she would in the North River. We found Mr. Ellery at Long Wharf, Edward and Harriet Channing on the door-step, and after a cordial greeting

<sup>1</sup> The domestics.

from all, and a kind invitation from Mr. E. to stop at his house, I made my way to Mr. Potter's. Mr. Potter's *Belle vue*, on the top of the hill, and overlooking one of the most beautiful harbors in the world, is head quarters. Mr. Potter was full, but he offered me a chair at his table, and a room in a cottage close at hand, which I accepted, though it was so small that I could not get into it until the landlord had retired. I was obliged to bow my humble head to enter it, and after I got in, it required the skill of a sailor to walk over the floor, which was as much hog-backed as an old steamboat. The ceiling was six and one-half feet high, and the bed was of straw or seaweed, laid in clumps or bundles about forty years ago. The bed curtains were equally ancient, and the only thing that seemed to be in a state of preservation was the air of the room, which one would suppose had not been changed for a century. I staid at Mr. Potter's until Monday morning, during which time I ate only one meal in his house, and that was the first morning I came. I was pretty much done over, and ready to ask on my knees the quarters I had refused. Luckily, I received them with a hearty welcome, and since then I have been playing with the dolphins in the sea, walking, riding, etc., and enjoying to the full the full-hearted hospitality of Mr. Ellery's capital house. I wish the major<sup>1</sup> were here; I am sure he would be happy. He is Mr. Ellery's Magnus Apollo. I wish *you* were here to feel grand and glorious in this broad and booming ocean. I wish Charlie were here to mount the waves with me. . . . Kate and Maria spent the day riding about with Dr. Channing, and came off in the evening with their *glorious natures* all expanded, all sails bent, and are now, I presume, *making progress* at an immeasurable rate. I had a line from sweet, sweet Sue Pomeroy,

<sup>1</sup> His brother Theodore.

last night. If she were here it would be perfect. . . .  
 Everybody asks after you, and the pleasure I have in hearing  
 you spoken of, and, as I believe, sincerely, exceeds all other  
 pleasures. Everybody sends love. Give mine to all in the  
 house, and tell Bessie if she will not jump out of the window or  
 break her neck till I get home, I will bring her the prettiest doll  
 in Boston. God bless you. Ever, ever yours,

C. S.

In December, 1831, my brother Harry died. The following  
 letter refers to that event.

*Lenox, January 11, 1832.*

MY DEAR ROBERT:

. . . . . We have all, I presume, participated  
 in the same feeling, and have all deeply felt one sentiment, that  
 of gratitude that his day of rest has come. For a long time his  
 disease was gradually exhausting his powers of life, and for the  
 last six months there was a moral certainty that he could not  
 survive it. We had nothing to do but to watch its progress  
 and wait the issue, taking care that nothing should be  
 left undone; that had a tendency to mitigate his sufferings in  
 sickness, or the last suffering of death, and praying to our  
 Heavenly Father for his tender mercies in such way as he  
 should see fit to bestow them. When death comes and cuts  
 off one that was deeply loved, it is impossible to repress our  
 regrets for any thought, action or omission of duty, that has  
 ever, even for a moment, obstructed our affection, or deprived it  
 of its efficient power of conferring happiness on the departed; it  
 is then that the lovely qualities of our friend are clearly revealed  
 to us, without a single one of those shades which before had  
 partially hid them from our vision. We look at the spirit as it  
 came from God, full of affection and goodness, without a parti-

cle of the soil of earth upon it. What is it that produces this common and general feeling when death comes? Is it not the monition of God touching the deep spring of our affections, to warn us against everything that can hurt or extinguish them; against sluggishness or carelessness, and requiring us to render Him our worship, in attracting to the utmost our love towards all those who are connected with us.

When I look back upon the strange circumstances in which Harry has been placed for the last five years, and consider the nature and habits of his mind, it is a matter of sincere happiness with me that nothing occurred to estrange him for a moment from our affection, that his awful solitude was determined before his reason had fled, and that we have not, except through ignorance, failed to mitigate his calamity as far as we could. It was a sad error to permit him to go into that solitude unattended by some friend to whom his life and comfort would have been as dear as to himself. This, I believe, was the only error that added to his affliction, and blessed be God that he lived to receive our atonement for it, and such attention from his wife ever after, as, I believe, no man ever did receive before, and which must have seemed to him like the balm of heaven. I suppose it is not possible to tell, or to calculate the extent of the blessing that Jane has been to him.

Independent of everything that she did to keep his mind in the proper track, to divert it from that train which was filled with evil, to soothe and to comfort him, the amount of physical suffering which she saved him by her ceaseless watching and her judicious treatment, must have been immense. Jane has omitted nothing that she could do, she has done nothing wrong, and it is impossible that she should not feel the happiness of having thus acted. If it is not secured to her as far as it can

be by the fidelity of others, there will be some inexpressible sins to answer for.

To his daughter Bessy, then six years old, and under the care of her aunt Margaret Dwight, at Northampton.

Advice is commonly administered as bitter medicine, and therefore naturally rejected. In this letter the ingenuity of love converts it to sweet food.

*Lenox, June 4, 1832.*

MY DARLING LITTLE BESSY :

I think of you so much that I cannot help writing to you, and besides, I suppose you would like to hear that your dear father does not forget you, hardly for one moment, and that whenever he goes to bed, and as soon as he wakes, he thinks of you and longs for your sweet kiss, and listens as if he heard your little feet trotting into his room.

As I cannot see you now to speak to you, I should be glad to write you a pleasant letter. The first thing I think of is to give you a little advice, but I know you get plenty of this at home, and therefore I suppose you will not care for it in Northampton, and besides all this, I love my little daughter so much, and think so well of her, that I should be at a loss what to say.

In the first place I cannot tell you to love your grandmother and your aunt Margaret, for your little heart is full of love, and you cannot help loving those who are so kind to you. And, secondly, I cannot think of telling you that you must be kind and obliging and obedient, for that would look as if I was afraid my little daughter did not know how to behave herself, and was an ignorant little child.

And, thirdly, I cannot tell you that you must make as little trouble as possible, for no good-hearted children make any trouble that can be helped, if they think what they are about.



It is only thoughtless children that spill their coffee and break things, and put them in the wrong place, and make violent noises when they ought to be still, and jump up on the table when they should be sitting in their chairs, and if I were to ask you to do none of these things you would suppose I was afraid to trust you away from home, and so I shall say nothing about the matter, but just conclude that my little daughter will do just what she thinks is right, and will please her father.

We had a pretty tiresome ride from Northampton. It was not possible for me to ride home without having your place filled with something beautiful, and so I got a box of strawberries that were all blown out, and their little white heads all stood up and bobbed about, and were very pretty, but they neither spoke nor smiled; they had no mind to think and no heart to feel, like my little daughter, and I was very sorrowful; but I remembered that you had a good and pleasant home, and kind friends, and was learning to be useful, and was very happy, and so instead of looking back, I thought I would look forward to the time when we should meet again, and, if possible, love each other all the better for having parted.

Little Willie spent his time on the road between pleasant songs and pleasant dreams, and was very good all the way, but he was very tired when he got home, poor little fellow, and cried very hard. He went to sleep at last, and the next morning he was as gay and as bright as a bird. Mary Sewall came Saturday evening, and Robert Watson came Friday evening, and Mary brought you a note from Kitty, and a very sweet letter from Kitty to your aunt Hopkins, in French, and some sugar plums for you, which will be sent by aunt Fanny, and your mother says she will send your first lessons if I will try to send you something to remember me. You must get aunt Margaret to write a few lines when you get this letter, and tell us

how you do, and all about you, and you must send me some message and let me know how aunt Susan is, and whether she is patient about the weather. O, how I wish it was warm and pleasant, and then she could go out every day, and you, instead of sliding down the floor with the triangle, could live in the sun, skipping like a kitten and visiting your friends. You must give my love to grandmother and aunt Margaret, and aunt Susan, and aunt Mary, and uncle Josiah, and everybody, and be particular and give my love to Miss E. S. Everybody sends love to you that can speak, and if Willie could speak I would make him say "darling Bessie" the first word he spoke. Good night, my sweet bird. Dream of

FATHER.

To his brother Robert.

*Lenox, Jan. 7, 1833.*

DEAR BROTHER :

I received your letter in answer to mine, and since, one from Catherine, in which she says you throw *cold water* on my plan.<sup>1</sup> This I expected. But I wish to inform you, my son, that I have arrived at that period of life *at* which it is said that a desperate resolution may overcome the previous vices of the character, and *after* which it is said that if a person remains blind to his defects, there is no hope of him. You will please to recollect that I had the misfortune to be born, not only a younger *son*, but the youngest *child*, at a time when primogeniture was not only in law, but in fact, everything. I yielded to the fatal delusion that the privileged order embraced and included everything that was good, great and supremely wise, and with the blindness of a Catholic's faith I adopted all opin-

<sup>1</sup> A plan for an agency to effect loans of English capital in this country.

ions and performed every action prescribed by my elder brothers. I was in a state of complete but satisfied surveillance. But I wish to inform you that the progress of the *age*, which has thrown light on everything, has affected my mind, as it has every other thing, with the spirit of revolution. When divine right and despotism in one country, tythes and taxes in another, and in our own the Union and the tariff, are going to the devil, it is no time for one to acquiesce in the slavish doctrine of passive obedience. I am henceforth a free sovereign, and with your consent will be an independent person. I feel such a respect for your feelings that I shall, as I have done, treat them with the utmost delicacy; but your *judgment*, that must be submitted to the test of my understanding. If the laws of your State are a mystery, I shall swallow them as such, until I can hasten (roll on) the glorious day when they shall be revealed to the comprehension of those for whose benefit they purport to have been made.

After explaining his plan in detail, my brother concludes as follows:

What insuperable difficulty is there in such a proceeding? I know it would require time and labor, that for some time it would yield but little; but suppose it to succeed, then if I should happen to lose my office or my health, I should neither be bankrupt nor dependent. I should have no motive to hang myself, and you none to wish me hung.

*Lenox, July 21, 1833.*

MY DEAR CATHERINE:

By the time this reaches you you will have escaped, I trust, all the perils of a journey<sup>1</sup> that has seemed to me very long, and be upon the point of receiving that welcome from all hearts which it has never been my lot to see awaiting any other person. O, how I wish I could fold you to my heart this moment. There is something in this unwonted separation that has awakened in me new feelings. I can compare them to nothing but those which I had when I was first separated from home, when the heart turns to everything it has left, and from everything present. You have never taken a journey before, even a short one, that has not been agreeable to me, from the idea that you would derive pleasure and health from it, but this journey, I know not why, has seemed to me an absolute deduction from life; thoughts of sickness and accident have troubled me, and I have fancied you were not very happy. My strongest desire now is to see you, and the thought of not being at Stockbridge at the moment of your arrival has made me sad these two days since I determined to go on with Fanny. I refused, notwithstanding her earnestness, to go before Tuesday, in the hope that you might be at Stockbridge on Monday night. Do let me hear from you, if only by one line. My greatest pleasure in leaving home is to think of the happiness that Stockbridge and Lenox will have when you get back, of the happiness you will have when Jane once more gets her arms about you, and you know and feel that at your own home you have the sincere embrace of one of the truest and most exquisite creatures that God ever made; what a blessing she is, and how she longs to see you. In the multitude of those that almost forget parents

<sup>1</sup> To the Virginia Springs.

and children in their joy to see you, do not forget me. Kitty declares she will not go to Stockbridge till she hears you are to be there. . . . What a fountain of life is opened by these children. It is not possible that the Being who inspires these feelings should not be loved and worshipped, and it seems to me impossible that beings who, in every new revelation of what the heart is capable of feeling and loving, turn instinctively to Him, can be created only for this transient life. I have great faith in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. I trust it will be inhabited by myriads of happy beings, creatures delivered from the mysterious power of those senses which love and loathe by turns, which excite the mind sometimes to its greatest power of action, and then bury it in darkness. Even these senses, which bewilder me when I reflect upon them, awaken my hopes and strengthen my confidence in the future. The same eye which is filled with a splendid pageant and feasts on the beautiful world, has still greater pleasure in looking at the countenance of a friend. The emotions excited by one class of objects are fleeting and transient; those which are awakened by a look of love or sorrow sink into the heart and create in us the feeling of a spiritual existence, which nothing short of Omnipotence can quench. We feel that there is a law of love that has its source in some superior power, that it is identified with our existence; that no earthly changes, not even apparent death, can separate us from it, and we are in this way, as well as in others, led to entertain and rejoice in the hope that the spirit will return to God who gave it. If I thought that my intercourse with you, with my family, with my father and mother, and my dear sister and brothers who have gone before us, could cease forever, I should be insensible to any pleasure. What I have done and enjoyed is hardly worth speaking of; what I hope to do and enjoy I have no language

to express. At present, however, I will content myself with the hope of soon meeting and seeing you face to face.

To his daughter.

*Jan. 26, 1834.*

. . . . . Kitty, if you are one of the best children in the world, I declare it is no more than a fair compensation; for the cuts and hacks you made into my nervous cords by your croupy coughs have never healed over, and they are now so weak that whenever I hear one of those low, hoarse sounds, it is as impossible to quiet them as it would be to fix the polar needle in a rattling stage coach. You must know there has been croup hereabouts, and black tongue and canker rash. Last night, when I got home, I found Willie had been disturbed by the assignment of new quarters. He had wandered into the dressing closet, where he was discovered by Mary Drear, crying, and very cold. You may have heard that, like those living in Low Countries, his territory is subject to periodical inundations; having no Dutch blood in him, he has no instinct of the dyke system, consequently he suffered from the want of customary vigilance, and when I went to bed, I found that having narrowly escaped freezing to death, he was in the very act of drowning. I succeeded after much labor and difficulty in getting him upon dry land, and at twelve o'clock was composing myself to sleep, when Johnny in the next room began to cough. I went to him and found him complaining that his throat was sore, and as he was an only son, which is apt to create a prejudice in favor of juvenile life, I tied a petticoat, the only flannel thing I could find, about his throat, and taking a hint from Combe, I thought I would look for some molasses, as proper for the ailments as the aliment of a New Orleans born child. I got a candle, made a

fire, and searched in vain. I then took some brown sugar as the nearest to it, and a dipper of hot water from the boiler, and thus armed returned to my room. By this time Willie began to cough, so I gave him the sweetened water, and prepared an emetic which I had locked up in my writing desk. At a little past three I lay down to sleep, and this morning I am just bright enough to tell you that Willie has not got the croup, nor Johnny the black tongue.

*Lenox, July 13, 1834.*

MY DEAR BESSIE :

I have received two letters from you — sweet letters — the last yesterday, and the moment I opened it and saw it was from you I kissed it. It was delightful, just as I am going away, to get another letter from you ; to hear that you are well and happy, and to hear from your aunt Margaret that you are good. We hope to leave Stockbridge to-morrow morning for Niagara. One of my last thoughts will be about you when I leave Lenox. It is an inexpressible comfort to me that you are in such good hands, and a still greater comfort that I can leave you in the care of that good Being whose care is over us all by night and by day. Do not forget this, my darling. Do not forget to thank Him. Do not cease to love Him as your constant benefactor.

It is a great drawback from my pleasure when I am gone, that I must be separated from my children ; but it is then, perhaps, when I have least business upon my mind, that I think of them most, that I am most grateful to God for giving them to me, most earnestly desirous that they should live so as to please Him, that they should be useful.

Do you often think how many blessings we have, how much

health, how many pleasures, how few wants? Only think of the multitudes of children whose parents are very poor, who cannot by working hard do anything more than just get what is absolutely necessary for their meat, drink and wear, and who are obliged often to keep them from school to labor when they are quite young—think, too, of the sick and helpless. When I think of these things I should be very unhappy if I did not know there was a remedy for them. What is that remedy? *Love*. If those who are well off in this world, and who have a plenty and something to spare, instead of being lazy, and vain, and selfish, would do what they could to make others happy, if they would take more pleasure in procuring a comfortable garment for a child almost naked, than in wearing finery which they do not want, how much happier should we all be.

To his son Charles, when at Condert's boarding school in New York,—twelve years old.

*Lenox, Oct. 19, 1834.*

MY DEAR CHARLEY :

As I told you the other day, I packed up my carpet bag and started for New York, with a desire to see you that nothing less could inspire than an absent child, as much beloved, I believe, and as deservedly so, as any boy that a parent's heart was ever blessed with. You will judge of my disappointment, therefore, by your own. . . . I do not consider it necessary to give you any injunction to improve your time. I look upon this as a necessary consequence of your uprightness and good sense. If I thought you a foolish boy who cared for nothing but present pleasure, I should lose three-fourths of the happiness that I now have whenever I think of you, pursuing your studies cheerfully and resolutely, like a person who knows and



*thinks* that time is precious, and can only be enjoyed when it is honestly improved. . . . I could not afford to be without you for any earthly consideration but your good, for when you are here, you do so little that is disagreeable, and so much that delights me, every day, that it is a great privation to be without you. I have not forgotten our occasional game of piquet; I now and then play a game with Kitty, after nine o'clock, but I never touch the cards that I do not think of you, and many a pleasant hour that we have had together. So it is when I go to bed, when I rise up, when I walk or ride.

To the same.

January, 1835.

DEAR CHARLEY:

. . . . . Every time I hear from you there is something to gratify me. Your aunt and uncle say you are a capital boy, and I understand your friend S.<sup>1</sup> says—no matter what—but what I expected; I have not time to write to you now, only one line. I will do that to put you on your guard against flattery, and against the partial opinions of your friends. There are higher rewards, and there ought to be higher aims, than praise. Secure *your own good opinion*, not the silly conceit of a person who has been made superior to others by accidental advantages, but the honest consciousness of a manly resolution to take your place among the reasonable beings on God's earth. Do not breathe the pure air of Heaven, and eat from the table of Infinite bounty without a secret offering of gratitude. Look up to the source of your blessings, forward to the end of them, and do not pervert them or lose the happiness in store for you by shutting your eyes to the obvious and true uses of whatever comes in your way.

<sup>1</sup> One of the teachers at the school.

To his brother Robert.

1835.

I wish to give you a little good advice and brotherly counsel, growing out of my leisure to observe (which leisure you have not), touching your working yourself to death without stopping to reflect whether you will not die sooner than is desirable. Now for such a man as Father Taylor, it is not, perhaps, necessary that he should live one year, or one month; for his memory would be embalmed with all the spices of gratitude and pious resolutions by every member of his congregation; and so would yours be, my son, by your family and relations, and near friends, and they would all be sorry enough if you should turn a short corner and get out of sight, but I am not aware that there is anything in the services of the legal profession, *after the fees are paid*, that creates a very strong or holy bond of union between the counsellor and client, or that has a direct tendency to canonize the clients, or materially to advance their spiritual condition. Therefore I am not strenuous that you should live on for the special benefit of those who have suits in court, but I have a positive desire that your life should be prolonged for certain private reasons, of which I will speak hereafter, and I wish you to have an eye to this matter, and look out sharp and not get worried and vexed, and worn down. "It a'nt equal to nothing at all in tantamount."

I wish you would tell Theodore to establish a system of living while he is in New York, especially not to get up too early. The race is too keen-eyed as to the things that go wrong in the morning, and they have too strong a feeling of responsibility about righting them. He overlooks the greatest blessing of the free trade principle when he tries to regulate private affairs before ten o'clock, A.M. It is rather pleasanter to go wrong sometimes, and to be sensible of it and take the consequences, than

it is to be arraigned, tried and convicted by any court not having competent jurisdiction, or the power of fine and imprisonment.

The above is a playful allusion to the family infirmity of feeling miserable and reformatory before breakfast.

My brother Theodore was grievously beset with this dyspeptic symptom.

The following bantering postscript relates to some raspberries which Maria's father had given to Charles, imagining them of rare value.

To Maria B. Sedgwick.

*Lenox, 6 A.M.*

I wish you would ask my brother if I shall send him some Baltimore raspberries. I cannot cut him the slips, but I can spare a few roots, about forty thousand. They are not particularly fine for fruit, as they only bear once in four years, how abundantly I cannot say, as this is the fourth year with my plants. The design of them chiefly is to give a wild aspect to a cultivated place, something a little above and beyond nature, rather savage. In short, they give the same sort of air to a gentleman's grounds which a perfect gentleman has when he takes off purple and fine linen, and puts on lion skin pantaloons.

To me.

*December 29, 1835.*

MY DEAR SISTER KATE :

I have not written you a letter since you went to New York, but I feel the want of one from you so much that I cannot put it off any longer, though I feel almost as much as you can your multifarious and multiplying cases of this sort. I

want to hear whether the fire <sup>1</sup> has occasioned any derangement of your health, spirits, or finances. If a fire to this extent had happened in the country, though it had spread over the whole surface from Maine to Mississippi, it would have put two or three generations in mourning, and for ought I know it would have accomplished what Mr. Hooker, of Lanesboro', now proposes to effect by a prayer-meeting, *i. e.*, converted the world ! And yet I cannot hear or learn from any of the printed accounts that anybody feels bad about it. I have seen no account of any suffering, except an allusion of Mr. Blunt's, in the City Hall, to the widows and orphans, for which he was severely reprimanded, and, according to the prevalent sentiments there, no doubt rightly. What business had Mr. Blunt to be bothering the people about a few hundred women and children burnt out, cold, naked and hungry, when they are considering how to build up the city ? How could the "improvements" go on if the citizens were to turn aside for such trumpery ? Why the devil didn't Blunt apply to the proper authorities and send those people to the almshouse, or get a parcel of cartmen and pitch them into Broadway, so as to increase the "elasticity" of the merchants in walking down town ? What was the use of trying to turn the attention of men of business to a few hundred, or at most a few thousand, desolate, destitute, despairing wretches, when they were all straining their eyes might and main to get sight of a golden calf ?

I have heard of but one instance where life was put in comparison with property, and looked upon as a genuine article, and that was the child saved by young Wilkins, and even then I could not tell, for the life of me, whether the remarks made to him as he came out of the flames safely with the child, expressed

<sup>1</sup> The "great fire."

satire or emotion. Something, to be sure, was said of his being worthy of Heaven, but if this, like Scripture, is to be interpreted by the context and other circumstances, one might fairly infer that he was considered by the spectators as unfit for any place but Heaven. It seems to me that the manner in which this fire and its probable effects are spoken of in all the papers I have seen, is as striking and peculiar as the fire itself. One would gather from the whole of them that the primary formation of human life was brick and mortar, piled up in masses, and that the great end of creation was a store of goods, all presenting the sublime idea, and going under the denomination of "a city." In fact, an individual is nothing in such a place as New York, nor a hundred scores of individuals. Property is everything, the sum total of existence. That being the system of things established, acknowledged, approved, why should those enjoying the possession, or engaged in the pursuit, mar their pleasures by a mawkish tenderness for those who have not got it, and can't get it? The destitute, old and helpless, in such a place as New York, have no "elasticity," "energy," or "courage," therefore they deserve no sympathy. They cannot help build up the city, and are not therefore wanted; they pay no customs, therefore they are contrary to custom; they are not articles of merchandise, they cannot be exported, they have no market value; to be sure they sometimes fall like stock (insurance stock), but they never rise, they encumber the man of business, and they ought, in my opinion, to be annually collected and thrown into the dock, or be removed into the country, which, perhaps, would better suit the common prejudices. To tell you the truth, this fire has been rather a serious and solemn matter for me to look at. I know the men of business were the immediate, and, apparently, the greatest sufferers, and

it was natural that they should be first thought of and looked to, but it does seem that they ought not to engross the whole mind of the city—that consideration, sympathy and help should have been extended to others. Perhaps when I know more of the matter I shall see other features, and more beautiful, in this lurid picture; at present the extinction of the flames makes it all seem black.

To his son Charles.

*Lenox, January 7, 1837.*

. . . . . Kate and I went to a Christmas supper at Curtisville, where we met your uncle Theodore and Maria, and many of the *plain* people, and had a nice time, and paid twelve shillings to the landlord. This last was an incident which gave, I doubt not, to our host a new and enlarged conception of social pleasures. You see we country people contrive by the Yankee cunning of clubbing, to have a grand gathering and a good supper, with a small contribution which never leaves behind it to the entertainer a painful sense of having spent something more than he could well afford for the pleasure of his friends' company, and which also saves him from that consciousness, which is so painful to a delicate mind, of having given a party which his neighbors can't afford. I must confess I like, now and then, these social democratic conventions. I do not think them *quite* equal in grace or refinement to the more select parties I have sometimes attended, and the wit, if there be any, is apt to be a little less delicate, and a little more personal; but after all, there is a freedom and warmheartedness there that produces a capital feeling, and helps by degrees to *level up*. I see no objection to these meetings. No vulgar thing is likely to

be said or done, and if there should be, it never meets with favor, and is sure not to be repeated. . . . .

To me.

*January 10, 1837.*

DEAR KATE:

I have just returned, and been treated to your letter, which always comes to us like a family box of bon bons to a far absent child, closely packed with a choice variety of all sorts of treasures, each labelled in the heart with love! love! love! Castillia was here on Sunday. I told him the tippet<sup>1</sup> was his, or mine, and I would draw for it, and it proved *mine* by lot. This was right, and now it will keep my neck as warm as my heart is, it will be a fit present; it is nice! We have had a Bible Society here, two speeches, one from Mr. ———, eloquent, in spite of his anatomical see-saws, and one from T., about reading the Bible as well as circulating it. He said it would make a man content with his lot in life — if that includes name and physiognomy, it is the highest personal testimony to the Bible I ever heard; it was a good speech though. By the way, did you see ———'s notice of your book? He always prints parts of them in his paper, and always tells how his children cry. Poor little devils! it really grieved me that they had any new cause for tears.

I cannot write more, but to send my love to dear Anne (Ashburner), if she has not sailed. If Anne had heard the announcement of her departure here, and seen through the key hole the shock it gave to the Lenox folks, old and young, she would have had one evidence of the love we bear her that even her modesty could not get away from. It is a nice tippet.

<sup>1</sup> A tippet I had sent.

Good-bye. Yours always. What more can your love ask, or self-love give?

P. S. Give my love to Albinola. He is one of the very few proud people that I do love.

I should think if Mr. Robert's heart has not got crusty with riches, or beat out to nothing by the trip hammer of whig victories, he had better write me while it is somewhere near New Year.

To his daughter Bessie.

*January 29, 1837.*

DEAR BELL:

I felt nearly as bad as you did last night, but these feelings must be endured or we should not be quite so loving and agreeable to one another as we are, and they must be cured (controlled) or we shall not be good for anything to anybody else, and shall not be able to use our minds as we ought to do in any except agreeable circumstances. In the present case I was glad enough that I left you with the kindest of friends, and where I am persuaded that with a little reflection and energy you will be able to make yourself happy. Does not experience convince you that a week, or even two months is much less than eternity? At the end of a week I expect you to make us a visit, and at the end of ten months I hope to have the whole family together again, without diminution of number or affection. In the meantime, try to persuade yourself that there is not more than one child in about five thousand that is as well off as you are, and that though you may miss some pleasures to which you have been accustomed, especially that of joining in every praiseworthy hellabaloo that is made in the house, you have an opportunity (somewhat rare for a young person) of im-



provement, which hereafter you will feel the good of. Do not rank yourself with those very young persons who look upon the *point* of time, when a feeling of homesickness comes over them, as embracing the whole of life. Do not look on your heart as a well that a man digs for his family, and which, if abandoned by the owner, becomes stagnant and useless, but like a moveable spring of gushing, bubbling, sweet waters, that sparkles with life, and refreshes wherever it may for a time be planted.

In short, wherever you are, be bright, and pour out your affections upon everybody about you. In this way, remember, you will do all that you can for the happiness of those from whom you are separated. Then if they miss you bodily, your character will be the more delightfully present, and they will be satisfied that what they have lost others have gained.

I am particularly anxious in regard to Mr. Castillia, that you should keep up your spirits, for if you do not, you cannot improve by his teaching, and you will add another to the many painful circumstances that depress him. Do you know how important it is in regard to such a person, to do everything in your power to make up in present happiness the loss of many years. Even you can do something in this way by cheerfulness, by making him as little trouble as possible, by making him feel that he is of use to you, that you are conscious of it and grateful for it. Affection is one of the most beautiful things in this world; towards the absent it should be cultivated, but then it should not be selfishly indulged, so as to hurt the feelings, or lessen the happiness of those with whom we happen to be; a little reflection, and a little discipline and effort will prevent this.

Think on these things, Bessy, and doubt not the faithful hearts that by day and by night beat with love for you.

Your affectionate

FATHER.

The following extract is from a letter written during the money panic of 1837. My brother never had much sympathy with the monetary public. He had some pity for losses, but he probably thought great and sudden gains the better for a little blood letting. The letter is to Robert's wife.

I have been most truly glad in this season of contracted purses and long faces, that there has been no visible change in Warren Street, either of the means of subsistence, or of the spirit of life, which dwells there, the one providing for a circle of friends growing wider and wider, and the other illuminating that circle with a hospitality and kindness somewhat peculiar, so near to the temple of the money changers. I have felt some curiosity to look upon a scene of distress so peculiar as that of a city made bankrupt by a universal surplus of property.<sup>1</sup>

To me.

*Lenox, May 28, 1837.*

DEAR KATE:

I send you my love for your letter received by the mail, "post-paid," on Friday night. I embrace the first private opportunity to return my thanks for it. I received also your note, seeds and plants, last night. The plants were delivered to me by brother Theodore, who said the directions were to put them in the oven and keep them there three days before planting. Whether these dyspeptic directions, which I knew came from him, were owing to losses in New York, or fatigue in getting

home, or being broken of a nap, I know not; but I immediately left him to put them in the *ground*, and not the oven. . . .

I see by your letter to Jane, and also to me, that you feel the panic a little about the banks, and living amidst a scene of ruin, expect to be hurt somehow. As the Sedgwicks generally fear something worse than ever happens, I take it for granted you may save more than fifty per cent. of your property; but if you do not, only think what luck that is; instead of owning twenty thousand dollars and owing a million, you owe nothing, and own the half of what you ever had. Jane has consented, and so far as I can judge, she has done it freely, that in case of necessity she will give you a room rent free, and board for one-fourth of each year. If I will do the same, which I have promised her, now with one-half your property, your expenses have sunk at once; so I pray you keep up good courage. I have a surmise that if worst comes to worst we can make three or four hundred dollars go farther without tiring out, and do a devilish deal more work for us than it is used to, and I have read an excellent manual upon this subject which I will show you when you come up, which tells how to make a dollar go a great way. It is called "The Poor Rich Man."<sup>1</sup> I beg you not to be downhearted; you have some property, you can do a little something, and I have a large girl who, if it is *absolutely necessary*, shall leave off music and Italian and help do a little housework, which Clarissa tells me is the healthiest thing in the world for women.

<sup>1</sup> A book I had then recently published.

To his son Charles.

*Lenox, September 19, 1837.*

. . . . . I should have answered your letter before, but I have not before to-day been in possession of ten dollars, which I enclose to you with pleasure. You do not say what you want it for, but I send it to you that you may have the option of declining to use it. I consider it one of the greatest uses of money for a young person to have it, and yet from sense, judgment and principle, to resist those temptations to which the young generally yield. Perhaps you will think the sum rather too small to give dignity to this moral, but to tell you the truth it is half I have, and the residue I want to-day. I think I can safely promise to procure and forward for your use all that you express a deliberate wish to have. I do not mean to go half way with you in my confidence. My *reliance* is on your character, your generous and disinterested disposition, your confidence in my affection, your determination to do the right thing, knowing my circumstances, and that there is nothing that I wish to conceal from you. It is, if not my greatest, certainly one of my greatest pleasures to believe that your virtue is strong, that it is not dependent so much on the guardianship and vigilance of your friends, as on your own clear apprehension of right and your fixed principles.

To his son Charles.

*Lenox, November 5, 1837.*

. . . . . A few days ago we were musing aloud upon the changes of the seasons. The friends and the strangers that had visited us had one after another taken their departure; the leaves covered the ground; winter made visible demonstrations of its rapid approach, the stoves were up, the

houses were banked, and we were contemplating the domestic pleasures that the frost could not kill, and determined to content ourselves with them, when a letter arrived informing us that Mrs. Jameson had reached New York from Toronto, on her way to England, and that she could not go back without paying a visit to your aunt Catherine, and that she would be in Stockbridge the next day. Your aunt was just finishing off a little book in a hurry for the Harpers, and for a moment she was insensible to the moral beauty of this great compliment. However, she soon recovered her balance, and all the preparations that could be made (they were only mental) were soon accomplished for her welcome reception. It was something of a damper that your aunt Susan's house was closed, and that your aunt Catherine had just got established in the wing, but everything was put to rights by your aunt Jane, who is always, on the spot at precisely the right time. She came up at the pinch to tell your aunt C. that she had concluded to ask Mrs. J. to stay at her house. It is curious to see in your aunt Jane how the simple principle of "doing good to all men *as you have opportunity*" works. It saves the labor of any extensive plan of systematic benevolence, an immense amount of care and anxiety and fruitless labor, and it produces results of happiness of which few are permitted to be, or rather few are, the authors. There is one other house<sup>1</sup> where the daily bread of social life produces its sweetest and greatest nourishment. To that house you have free access, a privilege which I trust you will not be insensible of, nor abuse. Excuse this short episode. Mrs. Jameson came on Friday last in the Hudson stage. The felicity of your aunt's invitation was promptly offered, and I am happy to say, most sensibly declined. I take it for granted, however,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Minot's, in Boston.

that lodging and breakfast are all she will get at Mr. Galpin's. Last evening your mother had a party for her. She has some thought of visiting Boston. I hope Mrs. Minot will take her to the Blind Asylum, if she can get in. *There* she would be fully appreciated. She is fluent, her language is graceful and beautiful, and her voice is *very* sweet.

To Mrs. Susan Sedgwick.

January 19, 1838.

DEAR SUSAN:

The dog you sent me is a she hussy. She is full of originality and spirit, which must have concealed her sex from the unsuspecting. She will turn out to be a Martineau in spite of fate, and a Martineau among dogs without legal, constitutional, or conventional restraints, must in the end be a nuisance, and always a nuisance when the character becomes public; I mean in these parts where the spiritual meaning of such things is not understood. In truth, I am puzzled what to do. To receive a gift from one of the choicest of one's friends, accompanied by every circumstance that makes a gift of, value, and return a *slut*, is impossible. To keep it after its character is revealed, is equally out of the question. The only thing I can think of is to send it to London, to Alfred Tennyson, the poet. According to the *Christian Examiner*, he has the true poet's spirit; "he has an eye for nature, and knows her in the *depths*; he has been baptized into the mysteries of the inward life; he communes with the soul of things, he lives in the life of things, and he feels with the *eternal* heart of humanity. What he truly knows he loves, and what he loves shines evermore with the beauty of the stars."

"With reverence he pronounces the common names of common things, as if they were signs of eternity."

I suppose in the eyes of Mr. Alfred Tennyson and his transcendental friend, the Reviewer, this little black b . . . would shine with the beauty of the stars, and in due time multiply His signs of eternity.

Yours ever, C. S.

To his son Charles.

*Lenox, January 29, 1838.*

MY DEAR CHARLES:

There is no reading in the Old Testament that I enjoy so much as the Proverbs of Solomon. They are accurate observations of one of the wisest of men. They are the universal earmarks of mankind, marks of character which every individual may, if he will, notice for himself, and which, if they were commonly noticed, would make us talk less of the *mysteries* of the human heart. They are observations founded on human nature, and no lapse of time, no form of government, no changes or improvements in society have lessened their forces. They contain in single sentences the marrow and substance of many elaborate, or milk-and-water treatises on morals, that have since been written, the index to many a feeling which we cannot control, and which we blindly wonder at in ourselves. Among them all, there is not one that impresses me more forcibly than that "a wise son maketh a glad father." What a word is that "glad" to express the unmitigated joy of the full heart. What a well-spring of life is the fountain whence it comes. I begin to believe in the actual and practical, as well as the designed, supremacy of the intellectual and moral powers. I think if I had read Combe at an early age, I should not have "potted and dawdled" away my life with so little aim and object, but it

is the pliable gristle of youth, and not the firm and set bone of manhood, that is to be bent and shaped by a self-governing will, and I must give up the active pilot's duty and content myself with being a stationary beacon light to my children, and feed my old bones with the hope that their young life will be illuminated by a clearer light, directed by a higher aim, and governed by a steadier purpose.

Charlie, for some days before I received your last letter, I unluckily fell into the blues. Your mother had dissipated them in part by letting in a little of the light of her cheerful anticipations, and the mail which brought your excellent letter and one from sweet Kate at the same time, drove them off entirely. There is nothing in this world (saving and excepting always an honest obedience to the law of God) that can make a loving parent quite so happy as a rational conviction that his children are doing well, *i. e.*, feeling that they are accountable beings, accountable to an all-wise, omnipotent and merciful Judge, and and that they are determined so to use their faculties as to be in no imminent danger of being called to their account too soon. I perceive by your last letters that your mind is very much awakened upon the subject of reading. I fear a little that you are aiming at too many things at once, that your reading is likely to be too diffuse. In this, as in other things, I know not what better advice to give you than to mark the effect of what you do, what you study, what you read, upon your mind. Do not mistake words for things, nor ideas for knowledge, nor fulness for strength; whatever increases your *knowledge* or strengthens your *judgment* is of course good. I think it would be well for you to spend some assigned portion of time every week in religious reading. I do not mean sermons and tracts, of course, but anything that shall turn your attention to the



works of the Creator, to Him as the moral Governor of the world, to Him as a being to be held in constant reverence and love. Religion, as such, has been in general so badly taught, the self-called religious portion of all communities have made so large a part of their religious duty to consist in observances purely formal, often hypocritical, and sometimes mean, that it is not unnatural for an honest minded, generous, ingenuous young person to be somewhat shy of joining himself to religious professors, or even being styled religious. But do you not think there is danger that from this cause, from the very consciousness of uprightness, we may be led into forgetfulness and ingratitude? Do not forget, my dear boy, to enter into your closet and shut the door, and there to pour out your heart in secret from the world, to the best of Beings.

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, January 31, 1838.*

. . . . . Your mother is all agog about phrenology. . . . It may be true, for aught I know, that a skull trigonometer and surveyor may, by putting two pins into a man's ears attached to a brass quadrant, and passing that over his head from front to rear, disclose in a flash those hidden mysteries of the soul which time and circumstances slowly and but partially reveal to his intimate friends, and even to himself; but it seems to me, I confess, that if O. S. Fowler can tell, by running his fingers over a man's head, not only what part he will probably act, but what he is capable of, the Lord has covered up more knowledge than one would think for by a head of hair. The system may all be true, but if it is, what is called the beautiful plan of Providence would lose something of its charm in my eyes; for I think it would have been better to

have shaved Napoleon and stuck his bumps out of the windows of the Tuileries, than to have killed two millions outright, and scared twenty millions half to death before it was found out what he was; and I think it would now be better to root out Webster's shaggy locks, and what is left on Harrison's and Clay's and Van Buren's bald pates, than to leave it to the Whigs or Loco Focos to decide which is fittest for the next President. In short, I should think it best to shave the universe, so that by common consent all murderers and pirates should be strangled in their birth, all predestined felons executed before the fact, and all those who are born to suckle fools and chronicle small beer be chucked into the ocean.

To the same.

*Lenox, February 14, 1838.*

MY POOR YOUNG THING :

I received last night two letters, one from your uncle R., and one from your aunt. The letter from your aunt I burned, at her request, because it contained a compliment to you. I hold it to be wrong to destroy such things; whether the opinions are right or wrong, they are evidences of character in those who express them, and as such should be preserved. In this case the opinion was, or rather the declaration, that you looked fat and healthy. I forget who said it, but it is so recent that you can ascertain. It may turn out to be the person who called you a poor young thing, and in that case too much stress ought not to be laid on it. I do not see that your mother has answered your inquiries about Carlo. Carlo is a beauty, full of spirit and activity, and I think with a lively mind. I think he ought to be taken into the school, but I presume we shall take another instead, and send him away to be educated. William

Tucker showed me yesterday the *New York Evangelist*, with an article respecting the "Love Token," copied from the *Christian Intelligencer*. The *Intelligencer* had recommended it as a New Year's gift, saying that it was written in Miss Sedgwick's best style. Some New Haven deacon was alarmed, and sent a note to the *Intelligencer*, headed "Be on your guard," and beginning, "You have been painfully thrown off your guard in your paper of Dec. 30th. The 'Love Token' assuredly is well written, but what is the painful truth, it is a Unitarian book, written by a member of the Unitarian church. It is a most unfit book for children. I would as soon put into their hands the Unitarian edition of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, adapted to the Socinian faith. Your inadvertent commendation will, I fear, make this a *fatal token* to some heedless souls. Please recall your notice." Editor: "We therefore retract our former notice, we stand rebuked;" and then follows from this independent editor, whose *fixed and original* opinions I suppose are the foundation of the Christian faith in Guilford, Bridgeport and New Haven, a caution against the insidious sentiments of a Unitarian writer. That is what I call a pleasing evidence of religious progress in and near the city of New Haven. . . . How is Mrs. Dewey and Mary, and what on earth is Mr. Dewey to do if he gives up preaching? Can he invent a prairie for his own use, that will cultivate itself by machinery? What is Dr. Follen to do? It appears to me that no condition is quite so hopeless and heartless as that of a minister of the Gospel without property.

To the same.

*June, 1838.*

. . . . . In the kitchen, that great theatre whereon are enacted most of the joys and sorrows of country life, the summer campaign opened with brilliant prospects of success. We began with an extra hand, hoping to transfer to that department all our domestic *broils*, which changes their character essentially, but O, the uncertainty of human calculations! This vain attempt to make the work easy threw unemployed time upon Mary Drear's hands. Bathing was the first luxury that occurred to her. She put her feet in hot water, not liking to risk a more general ablution. She fell into a reverie and fell asleep; she awoke at last, but not till this novel experiment had been carried too far, and that which was intended for mere physical enjoyment was converted into an absolute malady. She was knocked up and crazy as a loon. She has now come to her senses, and is resuming her occupations. Sally, the cook, lies by two days in the week with sick headache, but we shall get accustomed to this, and boil an extra piece of beef the day before, and do up the baking on the right day.

To his daughter.

*Lenox, February 7, 1838.*

SWEET KATE:

It has been very cold here for ten days. The winds have now ceased, and this is a clear, bright, beautiful morning, such a day as one should take to answer your letters. . . . .

The greatest affliction, the only one I have met with since you left us, is the visits of the Widow ——, who wants advice, and who wants it so to conform to her circumstances and the state of her mind, that out of a property of twenty-three hundred dollars she can have a large income without diminishing the principal,

so that she can have land restored to her which she has deeded away voluntarily, so that she can have the control of her daughter's person and property against the legal guardian, so that she can have a large sum awarded to her on a mutual account with one of her brothers, which account has been submitted to men of her own choosing and decided against her. To devise the best means of accomplishing these practicable ends, she comes to consult me day after day. There are some vexations for which there is no remedy but suicide or murder, and if the Southerners take the same view of the abolitionists that I do of Mrs. ———, I sympathize with them heartily.

To the same.

*Lenox, May 20, 1838.*

. . . . . I inquired of your mother, dear Kate, as soon as I saw her, of the condition of your eyes, and her account of them was not favorable. . . . Now according to my notion, the first duty of a human being is to discover, if he can, what faculties he has — they are the gift of God ; secondly, the circumstances by which he is surrounded — they are the appointment of God ; and then so to preserve, strengthen and use those faculties, as to produce the greatest happiness he is capable of producing to himself and others in those circumstances, he being the judge both of the ability and the duty. We are strangely linked together in this world, and there is hardly a voluntary action that we perform that affects ourselves alone. The happiness of others is involved with ours, and we cannot, if we would, live only for ourselves ; our characters, as well as our actions, act directly upon those who love us, and more or less for good or ill upon the meanest creature

To his daughter.

*Lenox, March 5, 1838.*

DEAR KATE :

How far a good deed shines in this naughty world ! I am quite in spirits to-day. The Court rose on Saturday. Yesterday Bessy being in Stockbridge, and I having been confined for a week, and the weather such as is only generated in the Isle of Palms, I went, like the good Samaritan, to see cousin Abby Willard, who has been desperately sick. The house where she lives has constantly, for twenty years, filled me with gloomy associations. Unless compelled by necessity, I have never been able to take the back road to Lenox ; and when I have, I have generally avoided passing that melancholy place. The thickest clouds of orthodoxy rested upon it, and besides, for a dozen years it has been occupied solely by cousin Abby and her spouse, without children to prop its creaking roof and tottering walls, and without any divine promise concerning them to bless them in their old age. In short, it seemed to me as the doomed dwelling-place of hopeless poverty and melancholy old age. Yesterday I went there, and in the twinkling of an eye the whole place assumed a new aspect. Cousin Stephen with a cheerful countenance announced to me that his wife was recovering, and he could not have had a livelier appearance if he had just been espoused to the "Nut Brown Maid," with the certain expectation of countless olive plants. And then I looked about the walls of this Old Country gentleman, and the contrivances for happiness and the signs of it hung everywhere. There was the old copper tea-kettle with its fluted lid and nose, sure marks of an ancient origin, and so bright and glistening was it that it seemed like the link which connected its owners with a proud and cherished ancestry. I looked upon it as a

proof that where that end of the rope which should connect one generation with posterity is cut off, it is equally pleasing to spend the time in coiling the other. At any rate, whatever might have been the satisfaction of our friends in daily retracing their descent, there could be no doubt in the mind of an observer that the materials of happiness were as abundant there as elsewhere. Everything bore the mark of pleasing mental occupation, successful pursuit and domestic comfort, from the warming pan, which could not tear the sheets nor burn your fingers, to the little polished iron with a long handle, so ingeniously contrived that it would turn a griddle cake of any shape without making a crack in it. This new light of my mind in regard to the Willards, therefore, is one cause of my present satisfaction.

In March, 1838, my beloved brother Robert, overworked and overburdened with many anxieties, was suddenly cut off from active life by paralysis. His life was twin to mine. I felt that blow as I never felt any other. I was less prepared than for sorrows that have come since and changed my life. I was to have gone with Kate to Philadelphia, on the very day on which Robert was struck down. Of course I remained in New York. My sister was confined that spring. Charles became anxious lest my health should give way, and urged my joining Kate in Philadelphia. The following is an extract from one of his letters on this subject :

Many and many are the times since I have left you that I have thought, with distress and anxiety, of your long and wearisome confinement. With distress, because everything that troubles you goes directly to my heart ; and with anxiety, because I think it seriously endangers your health.

If it were not that you have been too long confined and overworked, you would not have written me that half crazy letter

that worried my life out till I recovered my own senses and found you had lost yours.

If you write me that you mean to go to Philadelphia, I will call you good; and if you don't, I will work out in slippers every time the ground is damp, and I will ride out when it rains without a coat. In short, I will do all I can to get an inflammatory rheumatism.

To me.

May 12, 1838.

DEAR KATE :

How do you do? My wife and Bessy and Grace have gone off this morning. Martha, Mary Drear and Miss D., go this afternoon. Susan is at Stockbridge. Carlo, Willie and I are left behind. I am nearly as unhappy as —— used to be when he was surrounded by his family.

This morning when I wanted to write two or three letters in a hurry, I had, as usual, to hunt up in one place some paper, in another a dry inkstand and vinegar, in a third an old pen that had been used up, and fourthly a wafer that, in some unused room on the carpet thereof, had escaped the broom, and at the moment when I was about to be left by all that was dear to me, and *therefore* when my feelings were tender, I appealed to my wife to know whether, in case I refitted my writing-desk, locked it up and kept the key, and kept the whole for my exclusive use, I should be considered selfish or tyrannical. She replied sweetly, but decidedly and emphatically, *No!* My decision is taken. Henceforth I am master of a writing-desk. But I foresee trouble. The sweet spring of charity will again be poisoned by the seeming harshness of refusal, and my character will suffer where alone I could have any hope or strong wish to preserve it — in the bosom of my family. And there-



fore I wish, for the sake of my character, to leave this record for posterity—the only fair judges of human nature, for they have no disappointments to bias their judgment, and they alone can make allowance for the trials to which men are subject. I therefore declare that, during nineteen years of my married life, I have claimed the exclusive use of nothing but my toothbrush, and never of that without providing triplicates and marking one only with a red string; that I have uniformly, on request, unlocked my writing desk and offered it, with all its appurtenances, for general use, and that it is only now, after it has lain idle for one whole year, and been stripped of inkstand, sand-box, and the last pen and wafer, that I have proposed to take it back for my own; that my wife, and all my family present have freely consented to this arrangement, and that it is done with the full belief and general acknowledgment of all concerned, that but for this step it would remain useless rubbish and a disagreeable incumbrance. I look forward with horrid forebodings to the issue of this dark business, for what can seem more unkind to the freest person in the world than to be refused that which is most needed and most easily spared?

The following letter to Robert seems to me remarkable for its wisdom, for its tenderness and for its plain speaking of painful truth.

*Lenox, June 4, 1838.*

MY DEAR ROBERT:

Kate said in one of her letters you would be glad to hear from me. The idea of making myself agreeable to you in any way is certainly one of the pleasantest I can entertain; the difficulty, however, is, to possess myself of it so strongly as to make it the parent of a direct effort for that purpose. No person has

a right to consider himself endowed with the exquisite power of augmenting happiness, but he who has added something to the common stock of food for body and mind, and as I have not that pleasing illusion, I generally content myself with not obstructing the free passage of my friends to any pleasure real or imaginary that they may propose to themselves. I endeavor to keep out of as many sloughs as I can, or if I fall into them, get out without observation, considering it my first duty not to give them anxiety. I am as much bent upon not hurting their feelings, as the subjects of the good Francis were upon not hurting his when they snaked the prisoners of Spielberg through marshes and hedges that he might not see them; and when my friends travel my way I sometimes take a look at their tackling. This I consider the extent of my mission, which, according to my view of it, by no means includes writing letters, but if you think differently I should probably alter my mind and write you one, two, three a week as you shall prefer. There is nothing truer (do you believe it?) than that your happiness lies very near my heart, and if there is any way in which I can add the weight of a feather to your scale of good, you have only to persuade me of it, and my action will be the instant follower of your will.

To be serious, dear Robert, for in this changing world it is impossible to be long otherwise, I declare to you before God, that if I could brighten your hopes for the future, or lessen the burden of your present sorrow, it would cause my heart to leap for joy. If there be any way in which I can be useful to you, I am aware that there must be absolute truth between us—the only thing that can inspire confidence, the only thing whether relating to opinion or facts, that is respectable in grown up men or tolerable between those who do truly love. I do not think

truth requires us to speak out our whole minds, or to volunteer our opinions, or to express them at all where the circumstances on which they are founded are all within the knowledge of the person to be affected by them, but I do think that when one's opinion is asked by a friend in a matter concerning him, he is bound to give it, and so far as the opinion is likely to affect the conduct of a friend, he is bound to give it whether asked or not, and if given, it should be received without any of those indications of displeasure or uneasiness which so often deter people from uttering their honest feelings. If the opinion is false, or groundless, or silly, it is easily disposed of, if it is just it may be well to adopt it and not — it.

When I was in New York I was greatly troubled by perceiving what I considered your wrong notions in regard to your probable recovery. You seemed to have no doubt that it would be perfect and speedy. So far as I know, your friends believe that you will ultimately recover your strength, but that your recovery will be slow. Now what I wish is, that you may have the greatest amount of happiness that your condition admits of, and that it should not be in any degree diminished by indulging and fostering hopes that are likely to be disappointed. I have so much confidence in your principles, in your piety, and in the rectitude of your judgment, that I firmly believe you have more than common power over your state of mind, if you look at things as they really are; and I believe also that you partake of the infirmities of human nature. For instance, I believe that if you considered that you were suffering from a disease that might and probably would require one, two, or even three years to recover from completely, that you would acquiesce in the will of Providence, that you would adapt your mind to your circumstances—that you would gratefully

remember the long period of active usefulness that has already been allotted to you — the prosperity that has followed it — the honor and reputation that you have acquired — the troops of friends that surround you, and the very uncommon measure of your domestic and social enjoyments, that you would make it your study to enhance the latter, and that successfully, that you would cheerfully adopt the necessary means, and patiently wait for your final restoration ; whereas, if you are constantly expecting to be soon well and able to resume your business, if you are in the habit of associating your happiness with activity in your profession, you will not be able to turn to the greatest account the materials for enjoyment that are around you, and within your reach. You will constantly be fretted by disappointment, you will lose a portion of that influence which you have so happily acquired over your children, and in every way you and your friends will lose a portion of that comfort which is continually flowing from the determination to turn every thing that occurs to the best account.

It is certainly natural that you should wish to go back to your profession, which has been the source of so much good to you, but for one I should never regret it, if you do not go back to it at all. I think you have it in your power to render a far greater service to the world by forming the characters of your children, and of reaping a far higher reward in their affection and goodness, than any that can come to a counsellor at law. I cannot ask you to write to me, but I wish you would dictate a short letter, as long as you wrote to Mrs. Butler, and make your mark in token of your love.

The following letter to me refers to the preceding one to Robert.

*Lenox, Monday, June 11, 1838.*

MY DEAR KATE:

I thank you for the beautiful ring. I felt quite unhappy about my letter to Robert after I had sent it, for though I wrote it deliberately and slept upon it, I did not know but his mind might have undergone an entire change since I saw him; but of this I had, previous to your last letter, no intimation, and it seemed to me plain that he ought to have the true view of his case, and that it was easier for me to write it, than for anybody about him to express it to him; better for them and for him. It was a painful thing to do, but it was a thing of conscience, and most kindly and sweetly has he taken it, as I thought he would. The more I think of his condition, the more I compare it with the afflictions which are so common in the world and known to us, all the more clear does it seem to me that cheerfulness and thankfulness are the great duty of us all. From what suffering have we not been spared, that we could not help fearing, and how much, comparing our family with almost any other that we know of, for a long series of years and at present, have we not enjoyed of exemption from all the sorts of misery incident to humanity. Sometimes this comes over me in such a way that ingratitude to God seems the chief and crying sin. For instance, when such a person as *Clarissa*,<sup>1</sup> who seems literally to be cut off from nearly every pleasure but those which spring from her energy, her religious faith and the sweetness of her disposition, is called upon to bear a fresh trial in the fearful, perhaps fatal injury of her brightest, loveliest, most promising and most helpful child, and meets it

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Sergeant, a relative who lived in Stockbridge.

without faltering, without doubting for a moment that God is good, without a breath of repining or a look of discontent, I feel, for one, that I would give the world for the confiding and child-like love of a truly religious person who can say, in the midst of suffering, "Thy will, O God, be done," not from the conviction that dignity and duty alike require submission to an inevitable evil, but from the faith that God is our Father, that he is wise and merciful, that he will crown our life, whatever its period may be, if we truly love him, with final happiness, to which all those events which we blindly dread shall ultimately minister.

I wished very much that you should go to Philadelphia. I thought I saw in it much good to you and to those who are sorely disappointed by your decision, but I am satisfied you have determined as well as you can, and that is all I greatly care about in regard to any of the actions of those I love. I now wish, as you have given that up, that you would come home as soon as you can that we may enjoy the country together. It is most beautiful, and it must be very hot in New York and very trying to Robert.

We have written to Kate, as you do not come home, to return as soon as she can get an opportunity, unless in *her wisdom* she thinks she ought to stay longer. I have that confidence in the child, thank God — in her temper, affection and good sense, that I do not greatly desire her to depart from any plan she has deliberately marked out for herself, but I long to see her. Bessy has been a little ill for a few days — some fever and sore throat; but it is going off, and we are all getting bright to welcome you; what a welcome awaits you everywhere!

Louise is a very lovely child — perfectly so. During Bessy's illness all the children seemed to wish to be with her, and

Louise's devotion to her was her chief pleasure. It was quite agreeable to me to find that she was a general favorite.

You have seen, I suppose, Mr. Lowell's letter about the season, the first in eight years that the peaches have escaped injury in the winter; the finest season for thirty-two years! so that in spite of Jackson and Van Buren the country will live again.

*Lenox, June 11, 1838.*

MY DEAR ROBERT:

I am very glad you have decided to bring your boy. If a man only has the money, he can hardly pay too dear for just the right sort of person to have constantly about him. The one you have, I am told, is only inferior to Garland, but as there is only one Garland<sup>1</sup> in the world, it would not be right to monopolize him. He ought to be kept circulating to inform the world what a serving man may become. For mere manual offices, slight of hand, I have seen Garland's equal perhaps frequently; but in some respects he is unequalled. How pleasant it was to see him on occasions when others would have fretted for want of occupation, enjoy himself for hours intensely with a book turned wrong side upwards; then he was exciting — for instance, when he would ask directions three times over, and look as if he knew it all before, and I think it was very agreeable to have him always ready with the most satisfactory reasons for doing a thing in a different way from what we had all ignorantly requested him to do it; it was beautiful to see him keep time with his hand when he was rubbing your foot and his soul was bursting with music, and he too modest to give it utterance in any other way; and after the labors of the day were closed, when one would be naturally anxious lest a day of uncommon

<sup>1</sup> Garland was a colored man in Robert's service, who had afforded to him and to Charles infinite amusement.

fatigue should deprive him of repose, how satisfactory it was to hear him snore; it seemed like the kindness of Providence assuring us through the whole night that Garland was at rest.

Your "good man"—and a dear good man he is, spent the Sunday with us. I think I could not love him more if I had begotten him.

*Lenox, June, 1838.*

DEAR ROBERT:

I should be glad to write unto you for I have many things to say, but Court is going in, and the funeral of Carlo is to be attended besides—poor dog! he died suddenly yesterday, and so sudden was the blow, so great and almost instantaneous was the transition from the irrepressible joy with which he started with me in the morning for Stockbridge, to the dead and lifeless form which came in the wagon to my door at one o'clock, that all thoughts were turned upon poor Carlo, and many a school bred boy has died and been less mourned. Tell Bryant that I do not know anything to get my grief off but an epitaph or some such thing, and he must write one.

Carlo was seven or eight months old, born in Hudson, came to me in extreme youth, in extreme cold weather, as a foundling; great and pleasant is the intercourse I have had with him; many a morning have I played with him when no soul was stirring, and many a night have I gone to the wood-house where he slept, when the family were in bed, and made believe I was a straggler, and he has made a terrible rumpus and barking, and I would let him come almost upon me and then I would speak to him, and how mortified he would seem, struggling between shame and affection, forgetting that blustering parade that man would have been blown up with by any such act of heroism;



and then how I would laugh at him, and finally how I would feed him, take him in and give him milk, and stroke him and carèss him, and bid him good night. And how many times has Carlo trampled over the whole garden when I went there, taking a short cut to get at me and spoiling the beds, and how angry has John been with him, and how much more have I sympathized with the reckless, affectionate dog, than with the hard working gardener whose labors he spoiled. How often by his freaks has he dashed the whole system, the utilitarian, to the ground. I can recollect no useful action that he has done in his short life. Many a bed has he spoiled, many a carpet has he soiled. He has left the prints of his dirty feet in the house and on my clothes, and yet he had a heart and I loved him.

Carlo went with me yesterday to Stockbridge for the first time. In returning he was very hot. I stopped for him to refresh himself in a brook; he went in and lapped water freely; in about three or four minutes he began to bark and howl, and run with all his might; this he did for half a mile, then he was quiet and came a mile further, than he began as before — ran to the bottom of the hill this side of Ged. Smith's, fell into the ditch and had a convulsion. I got him with difficulty within half a mile of home, and at one he was brought home in the wagon. He struggled over as he reached the village; he stopped at the back door, I put my hand on his breast and he breathed his last.

Your affectionate

C. S.

[So he loved a dog.]

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, June 14, 1838.*

. . . . . We were really distressed by your account of the little E. The loss of a beautiful young child is almost the greatest that can be borne. It is the destruction of affections as pure as they can be in this world, of hopes unbounded by any experience of disappointment, of a character capable of perfection. The loss, therefore, is immeasurable. We are constantly hoping for our own children, at least exemption from the follies we have been tempted to commit, we expect to prevent those faults of habit and temper which we have been insensibly led into. We expect them to secure the blessings of knowledge which we were never wise enough to desire for ourselves "till milking time was past and gone." In short, we expect that our love will quicken and fortify their principles, and that our experience will supply them with energy. These are the delusions of many a parent, the business of whose life it is to open a highway for his children, who is constantly cutting deep ruts in it by his ignorance and folly, leading his children into them by the force of his example, and then, with the enthusiasm and dignity of a discoverer, trying to talk them out again. . . . . I have but one incident to relate, and that is interesting as having an important bearing on the fortune of one of our neighbors, besides giving rise to some philosophical inquiries in relation to the moral character and physiology of turkeys. Miss —, who supports a family establishment on an acre of land and an income of one hundred dollars, in order to keep up a respectable style of living and maintain her character for hospitality, having no husband, is obliged to husband every nest egg. Miss — had a turkey and sixteen eggs. This does not sound large, but to her vision, if rightly managed,

it seemed the potentiality of a grand dinner at Christmas and New Year, and of many a pleasant supper afterwards. She was determined to risk nothing. The turkey grew maternal, but had shown signs of caprice. Hens' eggs were abundant; the turkey's eggs could not be replaced. The thing then to be ascertained was whether the turkey was ready to *set*. This was proved by her quietly remaining on a nest of hens' eggs for a week. These were then replaced by the *real* eggs, and "then don't you think the dumb critter, at the end of two days, absolutely quit her nest and forsook it altogether." Miss —— was not to be baffled by such inconstancy; she forced her back, covered her with a basket and kept her imprisoned for two days. Then she suffered her to come off for food, but immediately put her back again and kept her as before, till the turkey found out who she had to deal with, and gave the strongest assurances that she would patiently wait the appointed time.

To me.

*Lenox, Sunday P.M., June 17, 1838.*

MY DEAR KATE:

We have just finished our family service with Lizzy and Susan's sweet music. The children have gone to the school-room, where the sun is pouring in through the long window light enough on their Sunday lessons. Gracie and Will are sitting on the front steps laughing at a hymn instead of learning it. Jo is in his room dreaming of prairies and wild flowers. Wm. Henry Turner Bates has gone to the tavern to restore equilibrium to his too serious mind. Eve, Sally and Mary Drecan<sup>1</sup> are amalgamating somewhere, and I am alone! in the wing! the greatest of luxuries except having you by my side,

<sup>1</sup> Servants, white and black.

taking a *social* Sunday nap. How I wish you were here, and Kate, just ready to wake up and look out upon your little yard, which is nicely turfed, and the grass luxuriantly growing, and which the children, out of love for you and me, have not trampled on, and enjoy the sweet shade of your maple bower, so thick that the sun's fiercest rays do not penetrate it, and every now and then wonder if the little honeysuckles will flourish, and whether I tell the truth when I declare that I have faithfully watered them!

I thank you a hundred times for your last letter and Lizzy's. I cannot tell you what a relief it was to me. I had for several days been dreading the effect of the heat on Robert, and now I can hardly bear to have him quit Rockaway for Stockbridge and Lenox, where in spite of all we can do, I am afraid he will suffer for want of proper food. How on earth are we to manage this? I have got fifteen little chickens which I am feeding for him, might and main, and I shall have more of them, but veal and lamb are the staples of the country. Can he eat ham and tongue?

I believe C. S. is getting better. I do not know, nor have I been able to learn, though the matter has been elaborately explained to me by Dr. Partridge and the surgeon, T., whether several vertebræ, including the spinal marrow, were lost and disappeared, or whether some other back bone was broken or dislocated. The first account I learned was that her back was broken, which I presume was not true. It is, however, a serious injury.

Did you know that C. is now more broad than she is long. How poverty and misery do put people out of shape! I should have been glad to have had you with me the other day in Richmond, where a company of the Irish are excavating for a rail-

road. I visited one of the shanties made to board, besides the family, twenty-five laborers and lodge them. The walls are of hemlock boards, one thickness; the roof of the same; building about twenty-five or thirty feet by ten or twelve, two stories high, the lower story seven feet, the upper about five. The sun plays on the outside and a cooking stove *warms* the inside, and there being no chimney the smoke takes fantastic turns through the chamber, and then works out at the open spaces of the roof. In this chamber the hands all lodge on the floor. I asked the lady of the house if the roof did not leak. "O yes," she said, "it wet the beds some in rainy weather." The "*damn'd Irish*" begin work at sunrise and work till sundown; two hours out for breakfast and dinner, find themselves, and get ninety cents a day. I supposed the sleeping privilege was provided by the contractor, who is doubtless an Anglo Saxon; and so it was, but whether he charges rent I did not learn.

To his son Charles.

*Lenox, June 24, 1838.*

DEAR CHARLIE:

Your mother is spending the day with little Libby Bishop, who is dangerously ill, and as she omits none of the many duties she prescribes to herself when it is possible to perform them, she left it in charge to me to begin her weekly letter to you. We have just finished our family service, in which Bessy has touched my heart by sweetly performing one of the parts in the absence of your mother. This service, like everything else which lifts our hearts to the source of our affections, and awakens a sense of their power and permanence, always brings my children to my mind with a longing for their purity and happiness which I cannot express. There are so few exam-

ples of a single-hearted devotion of all the faculties to the highest purposes of life, that few persons probably have any conception of the immense stores of happiness that God has provided for every human being, and which are scattered in every direction about our paths with that profusion which nothing could justify but the power to create at pleasure, and which are so ignorantly neglected or so rashly perverted that, instead of ceaseless and cheerful sounds of praise and thanksgiving, the language of mankind describes the world as a barren wilderness. Whatever folly you may be tempted to commit, my dear boy, do not commit the unpardonable sin of denying that God has created us for happiness, and whatever affections you neglect to cultivate, I pray you not to fail in gratitude to your Heavenly Father. Disappointment is the chief source of vexation and discontent. If we mistake the proper objects of pursuit, or fix our hearts on unattainable things, we shall be disappointed, of course. The love of God can never fail us, for in no extremity can we be deprived of its exercise or reward, a pure heart and a faith, fixed as the everlasting hills, that in the end all will be well. It is a matter of great surprise to me when I reflect on the subject, that the greatest want of our nature, a religious habit of mind, should be so carelessly neglected, and it is certainly my greatest grief that I have done so little by my life to fix it in my children. I trust, however, that they will be much wiser than I have been, and mark in season and accurately the disposition, temper and circumstances which are essential to peace of mind and freedom from anxiety.

To me.

March, 1839.

DEAR KATE:

I will thank you not to doubt my love. That is almost the only thing in the state of my mind that I ever felt quite certain of. That plant has been nourished by prayers and tears. It has known no abatement, suspension, or interruption from fear, jealousy, caprice, disappointment or distrust. What it has been in extent you will never know, for I could never tell or show by word or deed. What may happen I cannot tell, for tea and saltpetre are sometimes, I am told—death to the affections—but of one thing I feel pretty sure, and that is, that while I know enough to love anybody or anything I shall not with consent give up the *never failing solace* of my life—our mutual love.

To me.

*Steamboat West Chester, Saturday evening, March 30, '39.*

DEAREST KATE:

I wish I could sleep in my little room to night—wake up and hear you breathing unconsciously.

Don't tire yourself. Heaven grant you sweet sleep—no cramps, stout legs, a good stomach and good dreams; to Elizabeth, what none but Heaven can give, that energy and cheerfulness which have been my especial wonder lately, and which have made my visit quite different from what I expected. Good night. Love to all. Yours, in all Christian bonds,

C. S.

*Sunday morning, 5, A.M.*

DEAR KATE:

I slept *out* at twenty minutes past 3, which I attribute to not being interrupted by carts. What a pity it is to have your house on the highway when there is so much travelling by night, and the roads are so rough. It makes late breakfasts which are incompatible with high spirits.

When I got out of bed I missed my boots as usual, though I tried my best to hide them last night. The substitutes were a pair of *slippers*, big enough for uncle John, and about as likely to slip off as a shingle. Knowing that boots were the only passports required by travellers in this country, and that they were indispensable, I could not at the moment realize that they had been abstracted by a *friend*. I was ungrateful. As soon as I had made sure of my *pantaloons* I made search for the shoe-black. Where do you think I found him and my boots? In the pantry! Was there ever such a triumph of practical philosophy? Such a union of office—cook and shoeblack—the thief merged in the benefactor! the man who stole my boots, all ready and willing to give me a breakfast, some of the newest bread and butter I ever tasted. It was about the hour (rather later and of course genteeler) that I supped at Stanton's. I could not help contrasting the two entertainments, in various particulars; the lights and the viands were different, in the one were two lamps and a bit of bread and butter, in the other, astrals, chandeliers and what not, and *Patty de Foy Grah!* I have not read Cousin or Ripley, who I suppose are the Coke upon Littleton in metaphysics, and therefore I cannot tell the spiritual meaning of these things, or render them in verse as Mr. Channing would; but I could not help thinking in what a queer light it presented the *temporal* career of an immortal soul,



beginning with the divine philosophy, a cup of cold water, a bit of bread and butter to a hungry man with no light but that of a lamp, and a friendly word, and ending in the highest state of civilization and progress with the newly invented hell torments of roasting a goose alive! The little light of my negro friend at half past four, the hour of supper, has ended in the perfect day. How it was with the more brilliant lights of Warren Street I cannot tell. When you see Mrs. H. thank her for me, for the last letter from the old world. It is a great pleasure to have a long letter addressed to you, that you are not obliged to read.

In the spring of 1839 it was decided that my brother Robert should go abroad for the benefit of his health. His wife and I accompanied him; his daughter Lizzy, my brother Theodore's Maria, and my Kate made up the party. We sailed in a Liverpool packet and were nearly five weeks at sea. The first regular trips of ocean steamers were made the following summer. We returned in the Great Western in August, 1840.

To his son Charles then at Harvard College, a few days after my sailing for Europe.

*Lenox, May 7, 1839.*

DEAREST CHARLIE :

The letter I received from you in New York did me much good. It was so characteristic of you and so strongly marked, that occupied as I was, it did not fail to arrest my attention. The sentiments it contained have sunk into the secret places of my heart, like the sweet waters of life from a pure fountain. Youth, health, physical strength, intellectual progress, are all instruments of happiness, and united in a child, they animate us with hope, but they are all nothing, compared

with the sentiments of the heart, or rather without them—on these are founded our principles. They mark the character, and it is that character that streaks our path with light or involves us in thick darkness. If I were to spend a week about it, I could not tell you how many things there are in your nature to fill me with gratitude and inspire me with hope, and if I have any misgivings about the future in regard either to you or to Kate, it is because the world is so full of all sorts of temptation—because there is so much to spoil—because I have felt so much my own weakness, and because I have seen some hearts broken by disappointment, and not because I have failed to realize my heart's desire to the full thus far in regard to you both. You have heard that the party was detained one day by head winds and that we went with them to the Hook on Thursday. It was no pleasure party. It is no trifle in this world of perilous changes to separate from so many friends, to take one's arms from a beloved child, and that child young and a daughter, and commit her to Heaven on the heaving bosom of the restless sea. No child ever deserved more to be trusted, none ever was more trusted than Kate, and it was this that enabled me to part with her, and the knowledge that her aunt could not be happy without her. To my sister I owe everything that man can owe to a human creature. From the earliest hour of childhood, she has been true to me, every moment true and loving, and I can say with truth that her happiness and my own are inseparable. There are ties of nature that cannot be supplanted by any other affection. They may dissolve by their inherent weakness, they may be broken by violence, but the true disinterested love of a brother and sister cannot be overcome by any other earthly attachment. Accident, misfortune, folly, guilt are every day breaking up the connections that are

formed in this world; over them our wishes and our will have but little control. It is not so with parents and children, brothers and sisters; true love, thank God, binds them together in an eternal chain, in spite of accident, misfortune, folly and *guilt*.

To his wife.

*Lenox, May 7, 1839.*

DEAREST ELIZABETH:

I should not write to you this evening but to inform you of your *things* sent from New York, and mine. I started from the Astor House with one trunk, one basket, one bag and valise, one roll of oil-cloth, one parcel of paper, one bandbox, one ditto C. M. S., seven parcels and a cane, precious as a relic of Mrs. Butler. To these parcels, when I reached the boat, were added divers others from T. S., Jr., and one woman put under my charge by Mrs. Susan, who was left behind by the detention of her baggage. The woman, the parcels received from Theodore, and the cane, I lost in an infernal crowd on board the DeWitt Clinton. The last made me melancholy, and I bribed a man to persecute the whole ship's company on board the steamer, till berth forty-nine gave up that cane with which I slept, and from which I was suddenly divorced. I do not think that I need it exactly to remind me of its owner, who comes into my mind with almost every thought of the absent, but I have a kind of superstition about it, because Kate charged me to keep it. The laws of association came near getting an entire overthrow with me when I reached Stockbridge. When I entered Jane's house, three of Elizabeth's children were there, and seeing a whole family of orphans in one room prepared me, as they were near of kin, to be rather melancholy. I found

them, however, in the highest gale of spirits, which I suppose is not uncommon to young children who have lost father and mother at the same stroke, though it is somewhat contrary to the doleful language generally employed in such a case. Hereafter, if I wish to describe any very peculiar happiness, I shall compare it to that of a family of orphans.

*Wednesday morning.*

DEAREST E.:

I found I could not finish this letter last night without injury to my eyes, and as I am past the age when it is deemed necessary to render one's self incompetent to any service in order to furnish an egotistical proof of love, I went to bed and added another eight hours' sleep to the stock I have regularly laid in every night since I came home. The last night I spent in New York, was one of wakefulness and wandering. My mind was as restless as the waves of the sea, and I then thought I was sleepless because the sleepless billows were bearing off my sister and my child. Was it so? or was it because I was planted in a hot bed of feathers at the Astor House? The doubt I now have upon this point vexes me. . . . At Lenox I found all well at home. Before I reached home, however, I heard at Stockbridge, that my house and Bishop's had been broken open and robbed, and that the person suspected was John Brown.<sup>1</sup> The story made no impression upon me, and turned out to be false. Another thing, however, which still plagues me, is unhappily true, and that is, that John has been led into temptation and has undoubtedly taken hay

<sup>1</sup> A colored man, much employed by my brother, who by steady industry and even excessive work, had accumulated some property, and acquired an excellent reputation.

belonging to Mr. Tucker. Ann<sup>1</sup> left word with Mary that I must go there as soon as I got home. I did not, and in the evening, she came to me and told me a story about as coherent as fragments of the Arabian Nights strung together haphazard. She was half crazy, and my conclusion afterwards was that Ann, who can't even swear to the sunrise, had been helping John to contrive a story that would no more hold together than a tub of tallow without a bottom under the focus of a burning glass. In short I was forced to believe by John's own story that he had not only taken hay but *stolen* it, and I spent two hours with him to convince him that, hard as it was, he must go through the sharp process of humiliation and repentance. There is some organ wanting in the negro skull I am sure, for I was not able to persuade John that calling God to witness the truth of an incredible story did not convert it into truth. I pity him from the bottom of my soul. He has fallen from his high estate among his own color. He shares in common with all mankind who have acquired any character, the horror of degradation; he shrinks from it, and this pride is surely one of the allies of virtue, however, debased. I have assured him that whether innocent or *guilty*, I would still befriend him, if he would tell me the whole truth. He persists in denying the whole, as well what is proved, as what is suspected, and the consequence is and must be, for what I can see, that his best friend must believe that his extreme cupidity has led him to betray a *habit* of dishonesty, instead of his being betrayed by a single act. After all I pity him, and I hate only the systematic injustice which for years and centuries has corrupted the whole race, deprived them of an equal chance for honesty, and led them, even in New England, where they are commonly treated

<sup>1</sup> John's wife and a former servant of Mr. Sedgwick.

with contempt, to adopt a system of reprisals as a sort of equitable principle. I am greatly vexed and disappointed by this affair. I selected John from his whole tribe, and have helped his prosperity and delighted in it, and meant to make use of it for the common good of the blacks in these hereabouts. But I find in this case what I believe to be generally true, that the poorest devil must take care of his own character; he cannot put it into another's hands for safe keeping.

I suppose you would like to know how I am pleased with my company at present, I mean that of Will and Grace, for I have no other; so far I have spent every evening at home. It is truly the intercourse of soul, when the body is asleep. For about one hour in the morning and one at night the children are with me and wide awake; that is a positive describable pleasure. As for the remaining intercourse that I have with them, when Willie is in the trundle bed and Gracie in mine (a thing that all parties desire), I am not able to say in what particulars the benefit consists. I suppose, however, it is one of the "all things" that are "working together for good." It has just come into my head that if by accident you should finish your several visits, and come home for two or three days before the everlasting school crowds upon me, and pens up my soul in such a narrow space that it frets itself for want of room, that I should like it. If I could only see you for a few days contenting yourself with the legitimate duties of a wife and mother, satisfied with the children that I have myself begotten, and not hankering after some ten or a dozen more whose race and lineage you know not of, I should feel quite proud and pleased. I do not wish, however, that you should shorten your visit at Philadelphia. That I consider your Canaan, your land of promise, not filled with surfeiting manna, but with the rich fruits of

the tree of knowledge which there is no sin in plucking, and which it is a portion of Heaven to taste. . . . .

Yours truly and affectionately,

CHARLES SEDGWICK.

I cannot bear to see a letter like this<sup>1</sup> with the sentences tucked in like papers in a hat or a wallet, you cannot find half, for you do not know the whole number or the place of any. I have just got a letter from Belle, and now, if the tide waters set up to Lenox and bring the Liverpool to Wilson's stoop, I won't open this again.

To his wife.

*Lenox, May 14, 1839.*

DEAREST LIZZY :

. . . . . I was sorry not to write to you sooner after I came home, but I did not see how I could do it. It is only those who are descended from the great author of "Free Will" in a right line, that can mark out their courses and distances. It is not in *man* that walketh to direct his steps. If it were, I should have spent much of the time since I came home in communion with the absent. It is said that life consists in action, action; so is not my experience. Action withdraws us from the pains of life, and keeps the fretting animal from outbreak, and *comfortable* perhaps, but for the most part it has to do with dead matter. The soul, in the common concerns of life, lies sleeping; there is no conscious true life, but in sympathy, love, at least to those who have experienced its power over everything else, and we need its demonstration in some visible

<sup>1</sup> The margins of the sheet and every corner and cranny were filled with writing, besides some interlinations. Before the days of cheap postage, space in a letter was carefully economized.

form. I cannot say what would be the effect of habits strictly religious; with them perhaps we should instinctively fill the waste places of solitude with every form of beauty; but to me, except occasionally and for short intervals, solitude is only another name for desolation. For instance, I rode up alone from Stockbridge last evening; I thought by turns of the loved and absent, of the Kates, of you, of Charlie and Bessie. What part or lot had I in the thoughts of any of you at that moment? What would I not have given to know that they and you felt the touch of that electric chain that binds us together? My very soul seemed to go out from me, and return to its prison house voiceless and void. Luckily Will and Gracie were not asleep when I got home, and there is something in a happy child to dissipate the most intensely painful feeling of privation, and shall I confess it? I got quite happy before I went to bed, and slept soundly in spite of you all. . . . The children say, when I ask them about you, that they miss you very much. Alas! they are too happy to miss anybody very much. It is a little tough to be out of sight out of mind, even with a child, but what would become of them, if it were not for the knitting of their souls and senses to outward things. They would get wrinkled in the very first years of childhood, and then what would be the aspect of the world to us? Wrinkles and furrows are bad enough in the old, bad enough when they are wrought by imperceptible lines perpetually drawn by the slow moving hand of time, and they would be intolerable, if the past, with its thousand memories of love and kindness, and the future with its hopes of Heaven, did not blend with the present and lend it an expression of beauty. I have nothing to tell you except that I want you to come home, and yet I would not have you cut off a moment from the plan of pleasure you have marked



out for yourself and so richly earned. You are almost the only person I ever knew that can carry the whole heart from home and bring it back again to your friends without diminution. . . . Yesterday I sent for Mother Tyler to come and dine with me. In the afternoon I went to Stockbridge and carried her home. The old lady had a nice time—she could hardly express her pleasure and gratitude! good Heavens! for what small favors the poor are grateful. She wondered that I should take so much pains on her account, etc., etc., and said something about my riding with her, as if it were a condescension. I should be truly happy to know certainly that there was no vanity in it. . . . Judge P. is holding the Court. . . . When I think of the uses of property, of the infinite variety of ways in which it is convertible into happiness, of the toil and labor by which it is acquired, and of the misery of poverty, I cannot help wondering that among civilized people the forms of law should be substituted for the spirit of justice; that by common consent the fruits of labor should not be as sacredly guarded as the ark of the covenant; that with the world's bitter experience for six thousand years, they should be wasted by the mass of mankind like water.

Human nature is a pretty poor concern—taken by and large, men are for the most part monies with their tails cut off. But there are traces of the divine life; we see it in the communicable spirit of truth and goodness, we feel it in the influence of a noble mind, and when the veil of the senses is rent in twain shall we not be like Him? shall we not see Him as he is? the beautiful image of divine wisdom and love. Let me know as nearly as possible the day you will be here. In the mean time I leave you with your dear and kind friends, with some feeling of gratitude for your means and power of enjoyment, and true

sympathy with your happiness. Give my love to Mr. and Mrs. B., and believe me to the full measure of my capacity

Yours truly and affectionately,

CHARLES SEDGWICK.

To his son Charles.

*Lenox, June 23, 1839.*

DEAR CHARLEY:

. . . . . I believe you misapprehended what I said about the "art of speaking," or what is more probable, I did not express myself clearly and fully, for Mrs. Kemble's reading of Shakespeare was in my mind. Take from Mrs. Kemble everything that is artificial, everything that proceeds from studying *effect*, leave her only the tones of her fine voice, varied and modulated by every feeling, her naturally clear conceptions and her intelligent comprehension of Shakespeare, which finds life and power in every word of his composition, and it would be impossible for the simplest of her readings not to surpass in effect everything that the highest *art* of rhetoric can produce where the spirit of the author is not both comprehended and imbibed.

. . . . . I feel less and less anxious about you from year to year, and more and more grateful to that kind Providence who has endowed you with good faculties and a right disposition. I believe there are few things in which parents more often err, in which they more frequently waste their strength or suffer needless anxiety, than in the efforts they make that the outward actions of their children should conform to the perfect standard of morality and virtue, or in other words that they should always act up to a prescribed rule. Perhaps the anxiety results from this, that there is no other way of determining with so much certainty in regard to a very young person that he has a

sense of right. That being once fixed and settled, experience is a rapid and powerful teacher, and he must have a dull and sluggish conscience who can content himself with anything short of his own approbation, and he who has that, must be deficient in good sense, in self discipline or in the motives of his actions, if he find himself unable to please the world. . . .

. I desire to be thankful that my greatest pleasure in my children results from my own knowledge and not from what others may chance to say of them. I beg you not, for the sake of retaining your place in college, or getting a higher one if there be a higher, to run the slightest risk of your health. I would rather see you come out of college an able bodied, energetic man without a single college honor, than to see you loaded with the honors and sinking under the weight of them. I do not know how I should feel if I had not an expectation that you would have a reasonable share of both. . . . I assure you that I am, with the greatest confidence an old man can feel in a young one, and with a proud and happy experience which has not abated it one jot,

Your most affectionate

FATHER.

I have made few extracts from my brother's letters while we were abroad in 1839 and 1840. They were written on folio sheets in his beautiful clear and finest hand, in spite of his delicate eyes and the quantity of other writing in his office and out of it, which to him was inevitable. But when did he ever excuse himself from one service because another pressed upon him? These letters are for the most part filled with little details of immense interest to us then. No circumstance relating to our affairs—or to those of any member of our family was omitted. After a minute account of my small money concerns he writes:

Did I tell you how much I was delighted by the account of your expenses — and *relieved*. Every particular touching your money affairs abroad has been a source of satisfaction to me. It is not the least of these pleasures that my sweet Kate is like to get correct notions of the relative value of things, and habits of skill, economy and accuracy in accounts, of the greatest use to everybody, and of infinite service in my family. I pass over, but do not forget, the acceptable service she has rendered her uncle and aunt. My next letter will be to her. If we meet, as I hope, in the other world, I will tell her what I thought of her in this.

*Lenox, May 7, 1839.*

DEAREST SISTER:

I have heard little, and thought of little but the winds since I left you. How these ministers of God do speak to us when they are driving our friends from us over the pathless sea! Before we left the Astor House, I thought that with one arm around you, and one around my darling, I should talk with you both till the moment of our separation, and yet with my heart full of the change that awaited us, my mind was sealed and my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth. After all, there was not much intercourse between us in the ship, and could we have talked together without making the bitter cup intolerable? I had it once upon my lips to say that I wished you could take my heart in your hand and carry it through all your wanderings, but I knew you felt sure that your loved image was hallowed in its most sacred places. I was sure you had no misgivings, no fears, no doubts, about my perfect love. I had none about your's, and it was this feeling that enabled me to part with you. But when we had parted, when I awoke in the

dead of the night to a distinct consciousness of what that parting meant, from brother, sister, child and other dear relations, whose life was bound up with theirs and mine, and when I thought of this brief life and its perilous changes, sleep entirely forsook me—I tossed upon the bed, I got up and walked through Broadway, and it was difficult for me to realize how any of us could voluntarily resolve upon this irrevocable step. I thought of you and marvelled at your resolution. I thought of sweet Kate, and I marvelled at myself. I thought of Lizzy and her desponding face as she sat immoveable as a statue in the ship. I thought of you all, and it seemed to me as if a desperate madness had come over us all which could end in nothing but loss—loss—loss! Since then I have recovered my reason, my mind has emerged somewhat from the narrow sphere to which suffering bound it for a time, and I now think your undertaking was wise and right. I trust in God that we shall meet again with a purer happiness than we have ever enjoyed together, and a clearer knowledge of the way in which we can enlarge the happiness of others. But for this belief, or rather this hope, I should think this a great hazard and a mighty sacrifice. . . . I did not read my mother's letter till I got home, was alone in the house, and thought nothing could make me more sad. I was mistaken in this. The sufferings of her gentle spirit affected me as if they were present; what a reality these things give to another life! Thank God she now sees clearly, and is beyond the reach of ignorance or mistake. Ignorance! O God, what is it! when our very hearts burst with the mistakes of those who love us best!

*Lenox, June 10, 1839.*

MY DEAR SISTER:

I have written to Robert to-day, and have nothing special to tell you; but I do so long for some intercourse with you, that I cannot stop for postage. This separation will no doubt seem easier to me, when once the awful stillness of the great deep is broken; at present it is very, very irksome. You are so far from us—and what has happened, what may happen before we meet again? Where are you? Where is my child? Where and how are you all? I have tried to get some comfort from your picture, but I cannot look at it—it looks very, very sad, and so does Kate's. What is it that gave me so much pleasure before in looking at these pictures, and so little now? Do our feelings give expression to everything? I have been perfectly well and comfortable ever since you went away, with the exception of the two days that followed; but I have not been light hearted. I shall not be till I hear from you, and then if you are all well and happy, I shall be gay as a bird. But I will not talk to you about my feelings, it is childish. . . . To miss Castillia when it is possible to see him, seems like turning one's back on the promised land. I wonder how many men there are on earth like him; we have known no other—one such man in such a condition is to my mind a revelation of a future heaven, and his pure mind, his affections and his bitter trials could not exist in the same person, but for the ever living faith that the sufferings of his present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.

Castillia is an Italian, of an honorable Milanese family; at the age of twenty-three he, with other noble and brave Italians, lovers of their country, was thrown into the dungeons of Spielberg by Austrian despotism, and there chained and confined,

sometimes in total solitude, enduring the sharpest privations and basest ignominies for seventeen years! Then on the accession of a new Emperor, they were released and exiled to America. Several among them became intimate in our family, and closely bound to it by reverence and affection on our side; they were men of superior intelligence and education, honorable gentlemen, true-hearted, loving men, ingots of gold that had contracted no alloy in the subjection of their country. Confalonieri, Foresti, Albinola, and our Castillia became our dear friends. He came to pass a few months at my sister Jane's; those months extended to years. He was as a brother to her, an elected brother to us all, and most tenderly beloved by her children. He possessed all the virtues that one can name, and in their most attractive forms. He was (thank God *is*, for he still lives) a Catholic—such a Catholic as Fenelon was, as St. Paul was, “clothed in the whole armor of God.” But Castillia has more of St. John than St. Paul, and as appropriately might that apostle, who to us is the impersonation of all gospel love and gentleness, have been *chained* in a dungeon as Castillia.

He loved our country, and would gladly have remained with us, but being permitted to return to Italy by the Emperor of Austria's amnesty, he felt that his duty recalled him to his family there, and to our incalculable loss and never lessening regret he went. The bond that binds us together has a divine vitality, and if we are permitted “to see the glory which shall be revealed” it will be with him.

In a letter to me in 1839, after eulogizing his “little Bess,” my brother says:

Ah, but you cannot tell how much I miss Kate, in spite of knowing she is doing me as much good where she is as if she were by my side. Indeed, the whole house seems to be on the *north side* since she went away, since you both went away, for I *never* separate you in my thoughts.

After notices of all the younger members of the family my brother says, of T. B. :

That boy affects me like a balloon, constantly going up and out of sight, but whether it will reach Heaven or be dashed in pieces on the earth no one can tell.

"Early dead and early saved," has solved the uncertainty.

Mr. B., who has been a missionary to France, and who wishes to build up the Protestant religion there, preached last Sunday. He is an *intimate friend* of Louis Philippe, Bernadotte, etc., and speaks of them as highly intelligent. But perhaps you will know as much of the religion of France as I could tell you. But you do *not* know that the Academy boys have contributed \$35 to restore the Protestant religion, in a country where they long reconsidered the vote whether there was a God.

To his daughter Kate.

Have I only written you two letters since you went away? I cannot believe it, but if it is true, it is for some such reason as prevents our saying our prayers more frequently. We can reveal nothing in our hearts, and we can ask no greater love than that which surrounds us from day to day. If I have not written to you, my darling, as frequently as you desire, I am sorry for it, for it would grieve me to my dying day to do, or *omit* anything that would disturb for a moment, the gentle current of your life.

To me.

Lenox, October 16, 1839.

MY DEAR KATE:

How glad we were to know that you had, by common consent, determined to leave Germany, and that when we were



reading your letters, you had in all probability seen the Alps. On the same day that I received your letter, I received also from George Pomeroy the journal and the continuation of it, fifteen and a half sheets, in a blank envelope by mail. I knew not the superscription. I kissed every page of the letter and have read the journal — with what mingled emotions you may judge. What you have written and many things you have *not* written, bring you and yours vividly before me, with your hopes and apprehensions, your joys and sorrows. Your allusions to our parting at the Hook touched me for a moment like the remembrance of an old rheumatism. I class them together as things standing alone in my experience. I do not expect to encounter again in this life anything so disagreeable as either. In the bitter temporary partings of friends, we give way to our imaginations, and our fears people the misty future of this life with horrid images; many bitter recollections of the past, errors, failures, disappointments, perhaps the result of one fault or folly, color the future and make it sad. I fancy it will not be so with the final parting. The sum of our experience then will give us a juster estimate of this world, and we shall look at the future of another, with the love and trust and hope of children, and see it gilded with the promises of an all-loving and universal Father. There are many things to think of in your letter and journal; those that my mind most dwells upon are that Robert has gained something, and that you feel that your health and strength are positively increased by your journey.

To me.

*Lenox, March 17, 1840.*

MY DEAR KATE:

Those who dwell in others' hearts and are conscious of it, who preside over its fountain of feeling, in some sort as God

does over the great deep; who have touched its springs, and witnessed their gushing forth through the quickened eye, the rushing blood and the living voice, God's witnesses to the truth of the soul, must judge from *memory* what it is to hear good tidings from the dearest friends on earth, after a long and dreary silence of three months. To give you an idea of the effect of your letters by the Great Western, I must turn you to your own answering heart, for there is no spoken or written language that can add to the prëexisting feeling, or even come up to it. I will not waste this little space therefore in using vain repetitions as the heathen do.

The relative positions of my brothers had changed by reason of the malady under which Robert was suffering, and the younger had now become the counsellor, the rock and fortress of the elder; and wiser counsel, safer support, and tenderer watch was never given by one brother to another. I have made the following extract from a large sheet closely written. Charles had to deal with a mind not impaired, but dejected, with a spirit reluctant to abandon the means and the hope of restoration. Convinced himself that Robert's return was best, if not necessary, he made it, by the way in which he placed the subject before him, the inevitable result of his own convictions. After stating the matter with that exquisite tact, which in him was the combined inspiration of delicacy and affection, he concludes:

If your experience of a European climate in winter justifies you in believing that another winter will confer upon you an essential benefit, I shall acquiesce in your staying, *perfectly*. I am resigned to your staying as long as there is a reasonable prospect that it will add to your strength, and when this point is decided with the same wisdom that has governed you in all the important matters of life, with reference to your experience, I shall be satisfied with the result. There is only one thing im-

portant to the happiness of our reunion, and that is that we should act rightly, and then, however that blessed event may be deferred, it can *not* be prevented.

Charles's letters to Robert during his absence, kept him informed of the political affairs of the country in which both brothers felt a deep interest, and both always independent of any personal plans or ambitions; Charles naturally, from his sympathies, inclining more to the popular party, but both inspired by a pure love of country. I am admonished by the growing quantity of matter for this volume to suppress details, otherwise I should be tempted to copy all the little particulars of the children's growth, the pleasant notices of their conduct, the exact statement of the health of each, which mark Charles's tender sympathies with all his brother's anxieties, and his devotion to him.

To his daughter.

*Lenox, April 3, 1840.*

MY DEAR KATE:

The court has adjourned, after the third week of the session, until Tuesday next, with the prospect of sitting a week longer, and when I consider what the disputed business is that brings so many people together, and detains them so long, and that its chief instruments and conductors belong to one of the most honorable professions known among men, I cannot help doubting whether the world at large has ever caught a glimpse even, of the design of creation. There never was a better satire upon human nature, a better collection of Monboddo's monies without tails, than is exhibited in our court house when the élite of the county are collected together, with Judge S. at the head, his trowsers coming half way down his legs, Doctor — praying with his eyes open that the judge may be wise, the witnesses true, the jurors impartial, and the adversary suit-

ors lovers of peace and charity, and all this a prelude, for the most part, to controversies so knavish in their origin, or so trifling in amount, that the authors of them ought to be kicked out of decent company. This, however, is but one side of the picture. The mass of the people are not engaged in law suits, and even those that are, have an individual life, that is not entirely swallowed up by this pestering, petty business. When I go home at night, after waiting all day for the termination of a trial which is to determine whether a horse-jockey shall be protected against a fraud, by declaring that his horse was sound for all he knew, and that he would not warrant him, or whether another who had been fined by a justice two dollars for a trespass, should finally succeeded in harassing his adversary by trying his luck by "the sacred right of appeal" in a higher court, and then read Woodward's report, or Howe's account of Laura Bridgman, I must confess that I think of our court house more as a monkey show-room, than a temple of justice, and the whole concern rather a humbug. The court has now adjourned over Monday for town-meeting, and the same people who have paid voluntary taxes of five, ten and twenty dollars a day, to enable me to send my children to foreign schools and to Europe, Briggs to go to Congress, Rockwell to Boston, and Byington to a warm climate to keep his boy from catching cold in winter, will wrangle till the sun goes down, to settle whether they shall pay the school teachers six or eight cents a head for their own benefit or the benefit of their children. I verily believe if the millenium ever comes, the time when the knowledge, integrity and charity of the few chosen, elect and precious of God, shall become common among men, that the authentic records of the meanness, stupidity, ignorance and selfishness of the present race of mankind, will no more be believed, than the Gospel of the New Testament is now among the Hottentots.

To his wife.

*Lenox, May 14, 1840.*

MY DEAR ELIZABETH :

. . . . . If you should survive me, and have an offer to marry again, I beg you will put "yes" or "no" at the top of your letter, or, by Jupiter, if you say yes, you will marry a blind man, for it will put his eyes out to find out the meaning of your hieroglyphics, unless his senses are quicker, or his eyes stronger than mine are when I get out of court, as I did yesterday, in the evening. . . . . Mrs. B. did not send her love to me, nor did Bessy, and the existence of such things, when they are locked up in the breast, affects me somewhat like a tradition of a fine climate in a foreign country. If the soft southwest continue to blow, it finally touches our northern cheeks with the airs of a genial climate. Language is the winged messenger of the absent that speaks to the inner sense, and makes a climate for our hearts to flourish in. Some of our friends look upon these words of remembrance as mere trumpery that mean nothing. I do not so consider them. They are God's witnesses, and unless they are suborned by the false or hollow-hearted, their voice is always music. . . . . Willie is extremely occupied — how I know not, but he leaves the house immediately after breakfast, and returns sometimes to dinner and tea, not always, but gets home always at nine, P. M. He has not yet found time to explain to me what so engages his attention, and I have sometimes feared that his time might not be profitably spent ; but after much deliberation, it seemed to me that I had better not prescribe rules which I could not enforce, lest I should subvert the course of nature, and engraft upon his young and thrifty stock a scion that would bear some bitter fruit. Charlie is quite busy, and spends the greater part

of the day out doors, reading I believe, some Greek in the afternoon, and in the evening, history. He has industry and I think energy, two important elements of power; a temperance in all sensualities that I never saw in so young and healthy a boy; a freedom from selfishness that I am sure is uncommon, and mental activity, but whether he has that hot constitution which is too hasty for order, and so often and fatally reverses the order of things, placing action before judgment, remains to be seen. I cannot help hoping that he will fly his kite with a strong string, and keep hold of the string. If he does, all will be well, for there is no person of my acquaintance, of higher and purer principles, or more generous dispositions.

To me.

*Lenox, May 29, 1840.*

MY DEAR SISTER:

I do not think you have done wisely in concealing Robert's condition from us. We have constantly heard accounts from other quarters, that led us to think we did not know the worst, and to fear perhaps more than we should have done if you had told us all. So in regard to Lizzy. I should rather have heard from you that she had a lung fever, than to be left to find it out by accident. The difficulty in these cases is that where we once know concealment is practised, we are always in a state of anxiety; there is no calm. Where the worst is told, we indulge all allowable hope, escape all groundless fears, and acquiesce in what has happened as the Divine will. Besides, where there is any concealment, the very effort to practise it gives an air of constraint and melancholy to every expression, and I assure you that the tone of yours and of Kate's last letters have given me more uneasiness than if you had frankly told

me all you have to tell. These things occasion forebodings, and ought to be avoided. You say distinctly that you have announced your intention of coming home at all events. I beg you now, whether you stay a longer or a shorter time, to tell me all that concerns you, and then I shall feel easy.

I preserve for my brother Robert's children the following tender appreciation of their mother's devotion to their father. My brother Charles had been disturbed by receiving for a long period no letter from Mrs. Robert.

Your silence seemed strange, and began to be very painful. I did not doubt your love for me, for I felt no want of any in my heart towards you. I had thought of you often. I had twice written to you. I had talked of you as a mother who had made the greatest sacrifices, as a wife who had shown under the most trying circumstances the greatest devotion, and as a sister who deserved all our sympathy and affection; but I was afraid that what was going on in my own mind had escaped you, and that somehow or other you had got it into your head that I was insensible to all you had undertaken and gone through for the sake of my dear brother. It would have been a deep grief to me, and now I feel sure that no such thoughts have disturbed you.

To me.

*Saratoga, July 29, 1840.*

. . . . . I found out that Mrs. F. W. was at Union Hall, in great affliction from the loss of her husband, confined to her room and the society of two Yankee ministers. I went over directly and begged admission, was graciously received, and after learning that she could not and never would be consoled, I proposed a walk with her. Finding that

I was of a tender and sympathising make, she consented, and after tea, we walked till nine, without a moon. The next morning I called, and took her to the spring, and have seen her several times since and walked with her, and I think she "enjoys her mind" better than she did in perfect solitude. I could not help hinting to her occasionally with some ambiguity of phrase, that I thought it *wrong* for a gifted and intellectual woman, whose power over society had never been interrupted, even by the most faithful devotion to domestic duties, to yield entirely to a single domestic affliction. I endeavored to persuade her that the gratification of such a grief as hers, though intense, was not right, and though I by no means insinuated that society had or ever could have any charm for her again, I believe I so far touched the spring of conscientiousness within her, that she will consider her talents but imperfectly employed if she devotes them all to the memory of her lost husband. By the way, she has vastly more talent and character than I supposed, and it is a great entertainment to be with her. I believe she did grieve for her husband, and did suffer deeply from his death; but I *guess* time will lay its softening hand upon her. I came near getting Judge E., who is dying to get married, into a scrape. He told me he had been to see her, and then pronounced a panegyric upon her, which had more of the enthusiasm of a widower looking for a wife, than the wisdom of a judicial sentence. I told him she had mentioned his visit to me. "What did she say?" "That your conversation was agreeable." He took my arm, led me out to the farther end of the piazza, and said he *doubted* whether she would make a *suitable* wife for him. I think I confirmed his doubts, by telling him that he would find that concern as difficult to manage as the tandem team of seven wild colts, to which he once compared his seven boys. . . . O, I promised not to forget to send L. S.'s love to you. She and



the Society at Stockbridge, that has an annual fair in August, are doing great things. She is going to put a stop to the slave trade by eating free sugar, which Sister C. bought for her at New Lebanon, and the Society, by sending fifty dollars to France, expects to stop the Catholic religion.

To me.

*Lenox, Dec., 1840.*

. . . . . Now you see you were mistaken ; I was not "in a little bit of a pet." So far as *you* are concerned, I am ready and willing to go to the final judgment, and when you get hold of my heart there, you may turn it round and round, and look it through and through, but I should not like to have a great many *by*. . . . .

After you went away, we drank a bottle of champagne, and then another, because I did not rightly recollect to whom it belonged, and thought there was so little it was not worth caring for. On overhauling the basket, I found eleven bottles, and now I'm on honor, and sha'n't touch another drop till you get *home*. When will the journal be out? Friend Plumb wants a copy before he goes to the West, and so does his daughter, and between them they must have it. I have bought a cow of his cheap, and therefore I shall give him a copy, and *charge it to you*.

My object (I repeat it) in preserving my brother's letters is not merely that their charm may be enjoyed by his descendants, but that they may love him, seeing him as he was, and loving him, cherish his memory, and be led by it in the way to Heaven. Any memorial of him would be imperfect that did not include the particulars of his greatest sorrow, the death of his son. The few references to it which I have preserved indicate the worth of this most beloved child, and the heavenly wisdom, and sweet patience of his father when the wrench came.

I cannot recall a blemish on the childhood of this boy. He came early to maturity, physical, moral and mental. We have no portrait of him except that which love, the most perfect photographer, has painted on our hearts; but alas! that cannot be transmitted. He was of the perfect manly stature, six feet, well formed, of a fair complexion, fair hair, blue eyes, a well-formed nose, and a beautiful mouth, expressive of sensibility as well as of the sweetness and affectionateness that characterized him. He inherited his father's disinterestedness; in both of them this ran to a self-negation that did not permit self-justice, the quivering balance they always struck against themselves. From what I have learned in later years of the danger of too severely working the brain in childhood, I think that Charles was overworked before that delicate organ was consolidated. He, more than any other actual existence, reminded me of Hamlet. He was the "oak planted in the china vase;" with a susceptible conscience, a metaphysical tendency, he wanted *will*.

He passed with success through all the gradations of school, entered Harvard College, was admitted to be first in a large and distinguished class, took the first college honors without occasioning an anxiety or disappointment till his third year. Then began to appear the consequences of the pressure of continued mental labor, of a delicate nervous construction, of a conscience too keenly susceptible, and of an intense love of intellectual pursuits. Each day of his life he was overworked in every way, so that when he came to the critical period, the time when the mysterious powers of nature are most rapidly developing, he broke down. In his junior year he was seized with a nervous fever attended with delirium, and though that soon passed off, his health was never perfectly restored. I copy my brother's first communication to us, who were in Europe, of the attack. His earnestness to allay our anxieties, and his struggle with his own are apparent.

Last week I received a letter from Mr. Minot, saying that Charlie was ill at his house of a nervous fever, and though there

was nothing alarming in the terms of his letter, being somewhat of a nervous temperament, and being, moreover, not indisposed to the journey, I thought it best to pack up and see to the boy at once. On the journey I began to fancy all sorts of evils, but great was my surprise and delight on arriving in Boston, to find that Charlie had been mending from the date of Mr. Minot's letter, and that he was fast getting into as quiet a state as the Sedgwicks ever are. From the moment I saw him to this time, he has been constantly improving. He sleeps as regularly and as quietly as a healthy child, and though he cannot feel the necessity of the quiet, idle and orderly course we prescribe, he submits to it with the utmost docility, cheerfulness and patience. I suppose that a less fidgety and anxious person than I am would not have thought it necessary that he should quit Cambridge; for Channing, Jackson, and Woodward, whom I consulted, told me there was no cause for alarm, but Woodward thought it best he should not go back immediately to his duties. As the nerves of the whole family are on the outside, and as I do not put quite so much faith in a college course as I do in a well-ordered mind, I think I shall keep him out the whole term. In the meantime I beg you not to be uneasy about him.

So cheerful and unanxious was this communication in its tone, that we none of us conceived the extent of our beloved boy's danger.

When we arrived from Europe, we found Charles apparently restored to health, but the appearance was fallacious. A mysterious, insidious disease was at work. Its manifestations were slight; the medical men called it a form of dyspepsia; it was attended with occasional fits of dejection. In February, 1841, it was decided that he should make a voyage to England. His father had been sorely perplexed as to the best course to pursue. In a letter to me, of date of the 25th of February, 1841, he writes:

I wish now not to look back—to leave the things that are behind and pass on to them which are before; and I now inform you, and I want you to believe it because *it is true*, that, for some reason or other, I have met with a change. Hope has sprung up! Charles's decision to go with Capt. Delano, which is in a great degree voluntary, and which nothing has prevented being entirely voluntary but his dread of incurring any further expense *in any way*, has a right, a wonderful effect upon my spirits, which will greatly increase if my friends in New York approve of it.

I give one or two fragments of letters written in the interval of anxious expectation after Charlie's sailing, which show how carefully he refrained from laying his burden on others.

To Mrs. Robert Sedgwick.

March 15, 1841.

It would be some relief to me if I could in any way relieve you of the burden of one of your cares. I do not feel my obligations to you and Robert the less, because you never remind me of them, nor do I speak of them often to you because I take it it makes a part of your generosity to me and mine, to treat me with the delicacy that you would one of whose affection you felt sure—one who lacks the opportunity, not the will, to be of service to you if he could.

This was after my brother Robert's illness, after Charles had had the *opportunity* of rare service to him, after he had left his family and his business for weeks, and attended him night and day, after he had at all times—at any inconvenience to himself—gone to and fro at this beloved brother's need, to serve him with his present love and infinite powers of delighting, and had taken on himself many wearisome business jobs.

To Mrs. Susan Sedgwick.

April 3, 1841.

The last letters from New York speak of you as being in somewhat better health and spirits. I rejoice in this on my own account as well as on yours, for I never hear of the sadness of any of those who love me much, without thinking that anxieties about me or mine have to some extent affected their spirits. I am grieved to hear that Theodore is suffering again with his foot, but perhaps it is better than to have the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint, which is the alternative with most people. The remedy commonly proposed for all troubles by wise people and *philosophers* is to *turn the mind away* from a disagreeable subject. I wonder if this has ever been recommended to Theodore. I can assure him, as I have often been assured, when my mind has been chained to the stake of some unavailing regret, or some horrible anxiety, that *if he will cease to think at all about his foot* he will have no more trouble with it; but as I have no great hope of his taking the advice, I trust he will preserve his papers, and make his happiness over to posterity, who will enjoy the sweet savor of his good name, the only thing I know of that can be enjoyed without gout or toothache or some other ailment mixing the bitter with the sweet.

Give my best love to Rie, and remember me most affectionately to all your people and believe me ever, and most truly,

Your affectionate brother,

CHARLES SEDGWICK.

In a letter partly addressed to me, and partly to Bessie, he says to Bessie:

I am glad you were able to see Charlie off (he refers to his embarkation for England). I rejoice in the undertaking, for it was

not done in haste, and I think we have reason to expect good from it.

To me he says:

Now that Charlie is off, you will be free from some of your anxieties. I beg that in no circumstances you will undertake the supererogatory work of carrying my load, which I apprise you is no heavier than I am able to bear. There is every reason to hope that this present enterprise of Charlie's will be of use to him, and if it should not result as we fondly hope, why then I do not see any reason why we should fix our minds on this one disappointment. Let it turn out as it may in regard to his present prospects, *I believe that the final issue will be good for us all*—not good through any harshness of discipline inflicting unnecessary suffering, but good in directing our thoughts to the Supreme Father—to his general plan of benevolence—good in enabling us to discern more clearly and more speedily than we otherwise should, how every dispensation of his providence may be improved to purify our hearts—to elevate them, and make them childlike, trusting and truly affectionate, and to believe that every present evil will only work a future good.

This faith he verified when the "final issue" came!

In a letter dated April 21st, not more than six weeks after the one just quoted, he says: "The Boston steamer ought to be in to-day. As soon as we hear I shall write you. *I am in no hurry to hear.*" What appalling anxieties were in those words. The steamer brought the news that his precious child had passed on, the day after his arrival at Liverpool. Captain Delano wrote that Charles was cheerful during the greater part of the voyage, active and useful to him. The day before their arrival he took to his bed and said he had a bad fit of dyspepsia.

It was with difficulty that Capt. D. persuaded him to leave the ship and go with him to his hotel—he was in the deepest dejection. The next day he was found dead in his bed with an empty phial of laudanum beside him. Charles was his father's pride, his joy, his infinite hope—but the blow did not strike him down. He was still so steadfast, so calm, that those who best knew his tenderness and his unqualified love for his boy, looked on with amazement. They felt the presence of an angel ministering to him. The following letters to me and to my sister Susan, written a day or two after receiving the fatal news, show how he felt himself sustained by the love of God.

To me.

April 23, 1841.

MY DEAR KATE :

I am sure you must be anxious to hear from us as soon as possible. I do not think that Elizabeth and Kate were as well prepared for the blow as I was. For the last five months I have almost daily and nightly felt this cup could not pass from me unless I drink it. We have all passed a quiet night. We are all tranquil and comfortable this morning. That fear, which in spite of me has so long embittered every reflecting hour, will rest—I trust forever—in Charlie's grave. He is at rest, poor boy, and I *am not unthankful*. I do not believe that unnecessary suffering has been inflicted upon him, or upon us. I do not believe that any suffering but temporary can befall us; none that will not increase our final happiness, if we believe in God. The loss of Charlie we shall feel till our dying day. It is the loss of sweet and pure affections, on which we had all counted for a great portion of our earthly happiness; but I *assure* you, after much reflection, that the loss is not aggravated by the manner of his death. I think there is as much reason to believe that that was a merciful dispensation of Providence,

as there is to think that God ever interferes in the affairs of men by any special interposition whatever. I cannot be too grateful to George for letting me know the whole truth at once.

I believe, and I shall endeavor to have the conviction constantly present to my mind, that Charlie has been taken from the evil to come—*mercifully* taken from sufferings which human skill could not remove, which the watchful affection of earthly friends could not alleviate.

I have but one bitter reflection that I am not at present able to exclude. I was impatient of Charlie's weakness, intolerant when his disease was upon him. The experience of seventeen and a half years of such disinterestedness and devotion as I never saw equalled, ought to have satisfied me that *disease* had wrought the change in him, and that he had no greater power of will than the dead. But I would not have you think I reproach myself on this account. I am conscious that I always had an intense desire for his usefulness and happiness. The glory of the terrestrial is one, and we cannot always see through the double veil that hides our own nature and that of those we love—the beautiful spirit dwells within. The glory of the celestial is another. Into that our boy has entered, having left the veil of the flesh, and if he is permitted to look back upon us here, his vision is not obstructed by the clouds and darkness of our mental nature. I have written to George to have what remains brought home. I desire it extremely, and so do all, but there may be difficulties about it which I do not apprehend, and I wish you to tell George that I mean to be reasonable about it.

I extract from a letter to me of the following month this passage:

I felt a strong inclination to answer your letter immediately, but I am glad I did not, for it would have given you an idea of



the state of my mind by far too sad. I do not believe that Charley will ever be long out of my mind as long as I live, and the feeling that I have lost, and that his sisters will lose forever in this world the presence and benefit of an affection, which seems to me more delicate and strong than any I have known in my own sex will, to some extent, embitter my life. But inasmuch as I have always been far happier than most happy people, and especially as I feel, even now, that the event which has so changed the aspect of all the accustomed modes of joy is the best that could happen, I have no doubt that I shall get over the oppressive sadness which I have not yet been quite able to shake off.

To Mrs. Susan Sedgwick.

You were too sad to write to me, and I am almost too sad to write to you, but I will not let Theodore go without a few words which I think will comfort you. It is four days since this heavy news came dragging up from Boston, and I tell you now that I am glad, I am glad, I am glad that my dear boy is at rest. I fear that some of my friends have fancied that there were some ingredients mixed in this bitter cup that have increased its bitterness—but I have not tasted them.

If he had no choice, God has in mercy taken him from the evil to come. His spirit has returned to Him who gave it, and is safe. I feel fully persuaded of this, and I assure you there is no terror in the event, nothing that hides from my view my Father's hand. Why, are not Charley and my brother, and others who have gone before them, ministering spirits, ministering at this moment, and constantly, to the heirs of salvation? I have not told Theodore how grateful I am to him for his visit. He will tell you in what a perfect manner Kate and Bessie have

behaved. I hope Catherine will finish her book. It will be better for her and better for the children if our strength does not fail.

One week after the news of Charlie's death my brother wrote to me this postscript to a letter from his wife.

*April 30.*

DEAR KATE:

I intended to have written to you and Elizabeth before this time, but it takes a great while to write a proper letter, one that expresses with tolerable accuracy the state of my mind. I wrote to Fanny (Mrs. Kemble) the other day and told her that her letter was a great comfort to me, and it was. I think that her letter, and your letter, your *first* letter, contain the truth, summed up by Robert in a few words—I mean of course, as to those points which bring consolation. I am so satisfied with Charley's change in his mode of being that I cannot murmur or repine—so fully convinced that suffering awaited him here, that I am thankful. There was a post-mortem examination of his brain, and the result was thus stated: "Neither time, nor care, nor art could have restored the organ." It had been too early and too hard worked. On one occasion when I went to see him at Northampton, after a short absence he came to me overflowing with joy. He shortly left me for his play, but immediately came back again, threw his arms around me and, said "everything was to think of you, father!" He has now gone before me into a higher state of existence, and everything is, "to think of him" with a poor, weak, mortal, but not altogether selfish sorrow. Elizabeth has spoken of Kate and Bessy. I am amazed at their conduct. It is an unspeakable relief to me. I think that Mr. Bellows's preaching has wrought almost a miracle in calming and elevating Bessy's wild feelings. Kate, it is more difficult

for me to write you than anybody else now, though it is generally easier, for I find it difficult to avoid the topics which I find it is best for us both to avoid. I must tell you, however, that I think you judged right in not coming to us. Indeed, your unerring instinct always leads you to guard the weakest point. Tell Robert that it is a great satisfaction to me that he looks upon this event in the wisest manner. He has compared the two states of existence as well as a man could who has experienced but one, and his conclusion is inevitable for a man who believes in the unerring wisdom, and *infinite*, boundless love of God.

To his brother Robert.

April 28, 1841.

MY DEAR ROBERT:

I thank you for your letter. It was a great proof of your love, for I know it requires a great effort to dictate to others, while your memory is taxed to remember what has gone before. I have not written to you before, because I can hardly get more than one idea into a letter, and that not such a one as I ought to express. I feel the force of what you say, and what others say to me, so long as I can fix my mind upon it, but I have the same difficulty that others have complained of, and probably every one feels, when called upon to subject the senses to the reason and make the *future nearer than the present*. I would not have you believe from this that I question the wisdom or the *mercy* of the dispensation—indeed I do not. I believe in both, and my grief is that I can only occasionally, and then for a very short time, rejoice in what I believe to be best for Charlie and for us—for us and even for our children. I think however, my dear brother, that I am not less sensible to the affliction of others than I was before, and I hope to become as others have become in similar circumstances, less selfish and

more wise. I was sure you would judge me kindly in regard to my New York visit. Independent of all feeling I had about it, it seemed to me it would be adding to your burthen and to Elizabeth's. I suppose Catherine has told you of the letter from President Quincy. We never heard a word from Charlie of his standing at school or in college, and never knew, till now, how high it was at both. I mention this only on account of his modesty, which was as rare as almost anything else about him.

The remainder of the letter is filled, brimming, with suggestions in relation to a journey my brother was planning, and to details of domestic arrangements he was making for my comfort. Impossible was it for the sharpest suffering to concentrate his thoughts on himself.

To me.

May, 1841.

MY DEAR KATE:

I should not write to you this evening, when I am unable, to answer any portion of your sweet letter, if it were not to set you right upon one point. I do not think my going to Virginia would be essentially serviceable to Robert or Elizabeth, and so far as I am concerned, I would infinitely prefer not to go. If Elizabeth would trust me to take her place, and Robert were *willing*, I would go and do my best, otherwise I desire *most earnestly* to remain at home. You are not aware how much I am under the dominion of the senses, and therefore how necessary it is for me to be surrounded by the most favorable circumstances on these occasions, when the thoughts, left to themselves, invariably take one direction. Here I am for the most part, and shall continue to be, very cheerful, for I have all the affection that is necessary, and the very best conduct that you can conceive of in my wife and children. Indeed, there is nothing I

want now but to have you at home, to be as happy as is good for me, or as happy as is profitable without the power of making your love felt for them towards whom it has never slept. I hope you are looking forward to finding us cheerful and happy. I am really grateful to hear that M. Watson is so bright. What a noble courage she has! I feel differently about these things from what I used to do. Now it is affecting to me to see the will of a delicate, loving creature put forth its energies under such circumstances as Mary's.

Then after noticing various little household matters, and affairs pertaining to others he says :

What a pleasant thing it is to find Susan so bright, so improved in strength and resolution. While the court sits, I am to ride every morning with Byington. You need not fear that I shall be indifferent to my health. If yours was half as good, I should not *at present* have much anxiety. The worst of our troubles and torments are cured by one means or another. I am glad you liked Mr. Parker's notice, and I am glad it fell to him to perceive, more than most others, the beauty of Charlie's character. It was because he fell in the way of Charlie's esteem and affection, and deserved both. Give my love to all, and do not forget dear Anne. Would to Heaven her eyes and every hair's breadth of her were in perfect health!

In all our family life, whenever sickness, disappointment or sorrow in any form came to any member, Charles, not enfeebled by his feminine tenderness, put forth a spiritual force to sustain us. He flooded us with the healing waters of his love, he shone on us with a serene, heavenly cheerfulness; still we were not prepared to see him rise above the gravitating force of his own heavy calamity, to feel him, instead of being the central point of sympathy, gently lifting the lighter burthen from our heart,

and teaching us by wise words, and faithful conformity to them, the duty of obedience to God's will, and the happiness of a Christian's faith and love.

My sister Jane lost in the autumn of 1841, her sweet daughter Louisa, who at the age of sixteen, and in the fullness of life and health, was suddenly cut off by typhoid fever. What he did to support the poor mother under this inappreciable, most afflicting loss, is laid up in her heart. My brother's life was secluded, "uneventful," but he fought a battle and won a victory to which the crown of eternal life is given.

To Mrs. Jane Sedgwick after the death of her daughter Louisa.

*New York, Nov., 1841.*

DEAR JANE :

I have often thought of writing to you of late, both before I left home and since I came here. I do not know that it would be of any use. It would only be to prove one self-evident truth, that we are fellow-sufferers—and one other truth that I trust in God needs no proof, that we are united in heart. I have lost a child wanting in nothing but happiness. You have lost one wanting in nothing that a young human creature can receive or impart. I have escaped from an abiding, oppressive fear; you have all the consolation of the sweetest memory, and both of us have the comfort of a strong hope. But the time will never come, I think, to either of us, when the one that is lost for this world will not embitter every reflecting hour; when that one is not so present to us as to throw a shade over the presence of every thing else we love. Since I have been here, I have been wherever I have been asked to dine and to sup, and if I am judged, as in my youth I should have judged others, I shall be deemed a heartless creature. Oh,

Jane, there are few human judgments that I care for. God knows I am not too happy, and if our dear children are, as I hope, looking down upon us, it will refresh their spirits to see us endeavoring, by what cheerfulness we can, to lighten the load of life. I never enjoyed New York very much, and now my poor unhappy boy walks the streets with me. I will try to do my duty as well as I can, and if worse things come upon us I hope we shall be able to bear them.

To a friend, on the death of the lady to whom he was engaged, dated Oct. 1841, about six months after the death of Charles Sedgwick, Jr.

. . . . . In the freshness of such a grief, such a bitter loss as yours is, and as mine was and is, one's relations to the world seem utterly changed, and our notions are all confused. As you yourself express it, we can even then *see* sufficient motives to exertion, but it is impossible to *feel* them. The heart is inaccessible, or nearly so, to all appeals that can be made to it. Only one idea seems clearly to enter the mind, and that is of irreparable loss. That you have sustained such a loss, my dear friend, in the death of one who engrossed your best and purest affections, and who, I should judge, would have been fitted, had she lived, to give the best direction to your mind, and at the same time to reward by her love and sympathy its most generous efforts, is a thing that I can in some sort feel, and feeling it, do most deeply deplore, for I see the difficulty of finding in one's mind that pure source of feeling and that noble and constant devotion to duty, which is comparatively easy when the eye of a pure and loving spirit is visibly fixed upon us, whose heart is entwined with every fibre of our own, whose judgment and feelings make an essential integral part of our own life.

But, my dear friend, these senses of ours are not the only avenues to our minds; the spirit of the departed does dwell with us, and unless I have grossly mistaken the spirit of your character, you will find, as time goes on, and *feel* and acknowledge that it was a great and a *permanent* blessing to have had such a friend, though she is no more to be seen on earth. The remembrance of such a friend is a source of immense strength in those trials of outward circumstances which are forever moulding us, an admonition that we heed, when all others are unavailing, in the conflicts of interests and passions; an influence present with us, like an instinct in any work of benevolence or mercy; a prodigious help in the hour of temptation, and, if I mistake not, the surest means, perhaps the only one, of connecting us with the spiritual world, of giving to our minds the meaning of many passages of scripture which have the highest meaning.

To his wife.

*New York, Nov. 19, 1841.*

MY DEAR WIFE:

You are faithful always, and your letters comfort me much. . . . The first thing I saw in my chamber was the Bible Charlie gave his aunt. It was not easy to read in it, but I have done so; and perhaps it is better, when one does read the Bible, that it should be put into his hands by a departed spirit. The dear sorrowing boy is almost ever with me, never more constantly or more vividly than in those places and scenes which are most usually by custom and association devoted to this world's pleasure. Affairs of business, and painful thoughts and events, occasionally so occupy me as to suspend his memory—a present or prospective pleasure, *never*.



The letters which follow show how his cheerfulness and his interest in matters of public concern revived.

To me.

*March 20, 1842.*

MY DEAR SISTER:

. . . . . The Creole matter will stick a good while before Webster's false step can be recovered, because the war spirit, speculation, and bankruptcy and slavery, will all be backed up by the authority of great names and party spirit. I think, however, the *government* won't make that go. A nation having no interest in our peculiar institutions which are domestic, and no partiality for them, can hardly be browbeaten into the support of slavery.

I do not know but I am in a complete fog about the affair, but as it seems to me, Webster is demanding of the British Government, what would not be yielded by any man in the Northern States, (unless it was some corrupt candidate for Southern votes) that is to coerce back to slavery persons who have rightfully recovered their freedom, without having made any previous compact, or agreement to that effect. Would any man in New England give up a slave in any other case than where he is bound by the clear spirit and letter of the law? Is there any such law or agreement binding on England? Paul, a famous writer on the "Conflict of Law," who is as great as Judge Story, and wrote before him, and without any prejudice or bias for or against peculiar institutions, lays it down as a universal rule that we ought to obey God rather than man. I think this is a sound principle, established in the universal Bill of Rights, antecedent to all constitutions of government, and I think the British Government will carry it out in this matter, inasmuch as it agrees with their own laws and notions, and the

practises of divers nations including our *own* in cases, though not exactly similar to this, yet as it appears to me stronger against Mr. Webster. One thing, perhaps, is to be said in derogation of Paul's authority, that no man like the great constitutional lawyer had, so far as we know, appeared as a statesman before his time, for I take it, Solomon, though his wisdom made a queen mad, was no touch to Daniel Webster!

I have been more pleased than I can well express, with the clear and powerful light in which this matter was put in Bryant's paper, with the arguments and authorities therein stated.

Fanny Wright, Robert Owen, Ripley and Ralph Waldo Emerson all appear to me to have got on the same wrong scent, that all the evils there are in the world are from some great mistake in the social arrangements, i. e., that if there was a different organization of society everything would go well. I don't believe a word of it. The trouble comes from under the jacket, and would come from there in a fortnight, if there could be a community of one hundred persons, male and female, if each one could have Wellington's title, Sutherland's income, and a perpetual guarantee of meat, drink, washing and lodging gratis, some beautiful Mrs. Norton, or some dear deluding Dionysius Lardner, would play the devil with the whole of them. Good bye, love to all.

Yours affectionately,

C. S.

To his wife.

*Lenox, April 28, 1842.*

MY DEAR WIFE :

. . . . . On Sunday I opened the tin trunk.<sup>1</sup>  
I have frequently wondered that you could pore over its contents so steadily, and then go back to your tasks with your ac-

<sup>1</sup> Containing letters of his son Charles, or relating to his illness and death.

customed cheerfulness—now it seems to me mysterious. It fills me with indescribable melancholy, and colors the whole future with a gloomy uncertainty. Did the sun ever shine on two choicer spirits than Charlie and Louisa?<sup>1</sup> Did youth ever furnish a combination of mental and physical qualities promising greater usefulness in their respective spheres, and a happier existence? Were the hopes of parents ever more naturally drawn to children, or more strongly fixed, than on those two creatures? The strength of the one yielded to disease almost before there was time to fear, and the mind of the other gave way, stayed as it was by a strong constitution, an active conscience, pure and heavenly affections, uncommon care and love, and a most fortunate lot! . . . But I will not dwell on these matters, or if I can help it, diminish the healthful pleasure of your visit. On Saturday, sister Fanny arrived at Stockbridge with Mr. Watson. On Sunday evening, I got a note from him, saying that she was very feeble, and though he was not alarmed, he thought that energetic, decided and *prompt* measures ought to be taken, and wishing to see me at Stockbridge. Of course I went without delay, and what do you think was the particular thing he wished to consult me about? There was no lower room at Susan's which admitted of a fire, and sister Fanny was too weak to walk up stairs. The night before, she had slept in a cold room, had suffered from it; the evil of that night and the dread of a similar one, had thrown them into the greatest confusion. With a form of expression, that no doubt must have seemed energetic to his pious ears, I asked him why the devil he did not get a man and carry her up stairs? This suggestion relieved him at once from difficulty. Indeed, I think it impressed him as a decided revelation of genius. Fanny smiled with exceeding cheerfulness, and the next day Watson came up to Lenox

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Jane Sedgwick's daughter.

and assured me that my visit had absolutely wrought wonders! . . . . . Mr. Davis has promised to stop the leak in the front part of the house, if he can, next week. This promise to which I have brought him at last, has cost me at least a crack in one of the commandments, and him many groans. The rest of my carpentry I have put into the hands of Capt. Sabin! not exactly jumping out of the frying pan into the fire, but more like taking a plant from frozen ground and putting it into frozen water. But good comes out of evil. There is no reliance on an arm of flesh. The world does go on, and therefore there must be trust in a Divine Providence. Do you wish to hear anything of your children? Bessie has behaved very sweetly and is making progress, I think, in the art of housekeeping. Will plays every day, as long as he can stand, with all the loafers black and white about town, and has met with no change that I know of, except having mounted a bandanna cravat. I was desirous of giving you the reason of this, and inquired of him for that purpose, but the reason was not founded on any experience or observation of my own, and not being conformable to any fashion, taste, fancy or caprice I ever heard of, I really do not remember it. Gracie belongs to the planetary system. She moves in her orbit, turns only with the earth and by the laws of gravitation, is always right side up, and has only this peculiarity that she has an extra axis, which enables her always to present the bright side. I wish Mr. Minot would send me by Kate a short certificate stating how he likes her on a short trial.<sup>1</sup> I presume he would not like to be bound by the opinions he expressed last winter. Indeed it would not be fair he should. They may be considered in some sort fabulous, being in part founded on the credit hastily given to the representations of an enthusiastic,

<sup>1</sup> Kate had become engaged to William Minot in January, and was now staying at his father's in Boston.

much biassed, and half-cracked witness. . . . . I am,  
with all the affection I am capable of, and with much gratitude,

Ever your's,

CHARLES SEDGWICK.

To his daughter Kate.

*April 20, 1842.*

. . . . . Do not flatter yourself, Miss Kate, on account of your reception by the Minot family. Mrs. Minot has practised in this way on many persons before, and sent them off with a full belief that their society was a most particular pleasure to her. By the way, I understand your mother has been invited there. I wish you would ask Mrs. Minot, if she has not overlooked a small place, which I noticed under the side-board in the dining room, where I think a small bed could be tucked in for a short child, upon an emergency. At present I have no design to have it occupied by any of my kith and kin, and it is with a disinterested view of extending the pleasures of her hospitality that I mention it.

This letter was written to the Rev. Cyrus Byington, a fellow townsman of my brother, and a valued friend. He has spent his life faithfully performing the arduous duties of a missionary to our Western Indians.

*Lenox, March 28, 1842.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

. . . . . It is an old saying that there is no stronger bond than that of a common suffering, and is it not another argument, in fact, of the immortality of our spirits, that the sense of these common sufferings awakens, in some degree, the affections of youth in those, who by long separation have become strangers, and sometimes even creates an earnest feeling

of brotherhood, where before there was nothing but indifference? A lady once said in a magnetic sleep: "If we could only see we should *not sin*." Do we not see with a new power of vision what it is that must constitute our highest interests both present and future, when some extraordinary experience shuts out, almost entirely, everything that ministers to our senses, or to our minds through them, and substituting memory and hope, carries us back to the love of those we have lost, and forward with an intense desire of reunion with them, and through that memory and hope, revealing in a far clearer light than common the great fact that the only permanent union that can exist between the creatures that God has made, ourselves and him, must be founded on his great law of disinterested love and active goodness? For myself, I feel confident that suffering is a good thing, and that without it we should be slow to learn the lessons of most use in this world. It is nearly a year since Charlie died, and I can never think of his love or goodness which, so far as my observation has extended, was never surpassed by one so young, without thinking that the effects of such a character *must* survive. Indeed, I can perceive in each of my children, and in some others, the fruit of his extraordinary character.

There is a young man, one of Charlie's classmates at Cambridge, who is now visiting us previous to his going West to St. Louis, to establish himself finally as a lawyer, a young man of great strength of mind, who has assured us repeatedly, that the influence of Charlie over him in determining the direction and use of his faculties, has been greater than that of all other causes combined, and that if he does anything in life, it will be owing to him. He told me that his first going into commons produced a new state of things in the class; that being confessedly the first scholar in it, and of the most marked kindness and integri-

ty, he brought together those who had always before been separated, and for the first time broke down the aristocracy of the college. To give me some idea of what this change was, he told me that a young man of great gifts and most charming character had, from poverty and neglect, lived on bread and water till his health was ruined.

This is one of many things which we have heard of Charlie since his death; and among his friends and acquaintances of all classes, the rich and the poor, I have heard but one testimony about him. His teachers, from his boyhood, have with one consent pronounced him first as a scholar; but so great was his modesty and the sweetness of his disposition that I thought but little of this till after his death. His talents would have afforded me no pleasure but for the use that he made of them, for I have long wondered that we should do anything but shudder at the abused powers of intellect—we have no hesitation where to class those who injuriously use any other extraordinary power, such as wealth or bodily power. Why should the gift of genius receive anything but the detestation of mankind unless it exerts its beneficent power? But, my dear friend, when I began this letter I had no thought of filling so much of it with this one subject. You must pardon me. I seldom speak of Charlie; when I do, I feel somewhat in the relation of a child to him who has gone before me, and the tribute to his memory seems like the necessary and involuntary tribute of filial respect.

I have often thought how curious it is that the three highest professions, those which give men generally the most consequence in the world, would not exist at all if the simplest laws of the Creator, justice, temperance and charity, were universally observed. How much time and power are required to bring even a portion of mankind in some respects back to what should

be a state of nature—simple honesty. I am convinced the millennium will not come in our day. I think, however, bad as the world is, it is slowly but certainly coming, and I fully expect that the lion and the lamb will lie down together without the fear of power, or the disposition to cruelty.

To the same.

I suppose you get the newspapers and know as well about public affairs as we do. If so, you must lament with me that the law-makers, especially in Congress, are such a worthless set. I wish some man, like Jackson or Cromwell, would walk into the House of Representatives, and tell them "the Lord has no further need of their services!" How melancholy it is that the precious gift of liberty which is bestowed upon us, should not, by common consent, with a common feeling of responsibility, be used for the happiness of mankind. But so it has been from the beginning of time, men have set traps for their own feet, and so, I suppose it will be, till some severe and common suffering, in the providence of God, shall awaken the delegates of power to the necessity of its legitimate, beneficent use. We have, as a nation, squandered blessings like the prodigal son; when, like him, we begin to feed on husks, we shall see and feel the righteous hand of God, and perhaps return in penitence to our duty.

T. C. H. Smith was the classmate and intimate friend of Charles Sedgwick, Jr. There were circumstances in their relation to each other of a most interesting character, and unknown to my brother till after his son's death. These were of a nature to endear him to his friend's father, and the development of his rare character was a source of ever-increasing interest. As years passed on, their sympathies multiplied. He made re-



peated visits to Lenox from his distant home, and was received there by my brother and by Charles's mother with enthusiastic affection. Their love for him seemed to have in it an infusion of their son's immortality.

As this collection is made chiefly to preserve the record of our family affections and story, I have restricted myself in making extracts from letters not in strict connection with our domestic life, and therefore have abridged the correspondence with Mr. Smith.

To T. C. H. Smith.

*Sept. 11, 1842.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

You may perhaps desire to know the origin of the peculiar interest that I take in your character, and something of its nature.

First, and perhaps above all other things, because you knew, and loved better than any stranger to my blood, that dear boy, whose vision is almost always before me, and whose loss nothing in this world can supply—partly perhaps from the opinion that sprung up very early in our acquaintance, that there was a similarity in some points of your characters, and partly because there has always seemed to me a load of uncertainty to hang over your fate. I am sometimes afraid that the strife and collisions of the world will be too strong for your generous nature; sometimes that you will not meet kindred spirits to inspire you with the efforts you are capable of making, and sometimes that the principles of faith will not take deep root in your curious and active mind, to produce an abiding conviction of the final triumph of goodness and its exceeding great reward. In other words, and perhaps more intelligible—I am afraid that the superabundant coarseness, ignorance and selfishness of mankind

will obscure that divine light which seldom shines out in human beings, and that you will, as other gifted young men have done, take society as you find it, as not much worth caring for, and that you will view the few and rare instances of moral beauty and goodness that are met with in the world, as rather the accidents of creation, than the indications of a common nature, which justice, humanity, and a generous and disinterested affection would develop in all.

When I think of the passions and desires that are given to men — of their freedom of will — of their infinite wants, and their necessary collisions — of their limited knowledge — of their short lives, and how necessary it is, in spite of the collected wisdom of centuries, for each individual to solve the problem of life, and work out his own salvation; and how slight, to the common mind, must of necessity be the revelations of the Infinite Being, I cease to wonder at our imperfect condition here. I am comparatively satisfied with the progress the world has already made, and my heart dwells with a new hope in the coming of that kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness. I feel quite sure that we can not be made for this world alone, because our affections go beyond it, because they are not satisfied with it, because character is a thing of slow growth, is affected by circumstances over which we have no control — because our purest and most cherished affections may be disappointed or crushed in spite of us, and because in spite of every uncertainty, and every disappointment, we cling to those affections as *our greatest good*. Why is it, my dear friend, that I am now writing to you? why is it that I prefer this communion now, to everything else that I can think of? My heart is with you, and will not the same Being that closes it against the influence of my senses, and

all external objects, continue to exercise its beneficent power?  
Shall we not always find something to love?

To T. C. H. S.

The postage of a letter is a small sum to pay for one word of affection and I *never* grudge it. Besides, you long ago awakened a feeling in me different from that inspired by any other young man. I never think of you without a feeling of deep interest and affection—one indeed that I know not how to express. I think too, that for the sake of my dear boy you love me, and I cherish the conviction as one of the fruits of his character—one that I can distinctly trace as such—one of those good things that come from the heaven within us, and one that would more abound if we were more careful to cherish the life of the inner man, whose power we feel and whose radiant beauty we occasionally see, when the soul of another is transfused into our own, or when our own, springing above the burden of mortality which presses it down, is swallowed up in the life of a disinterested affection.

To T. C. H. S.

Dec. 24, 1843.

The reading of your letter has put these things for the present out of my head, or rather given me a distaste to them, for the mention of Charlie at any time by anybody who *knew* him, turns all my thoughts in one direction, and wonderfully deadens for a while all the feelings that are not in some way connected with his memory. I am not sure that the interest I have taken in you, and the instantaneous process by which my attention is arrested by the mention of any circumstances that I can perceive to have a bearing on your character or happiness,

is not owing to your acquaintance with him, your love for him—your close observation of his mind, your knowledge of him above and beyond most of those who knew him intimately. Whatever the source of it is, there are very few persons living towards whom I am conscious of having so strong a feeling, a feeling, perhaps, which would be less strong and less active if it had not some element of fear in it. You have in your mind a high standard of excellence, and you must attain that standard or forever be afflicted with self-condemnation, or what is worse, if possible, take refuge in unbelief, and yield to the instincts against which you have unsuccessfully warred. You desire to live for the future, and the intense present is forever pressing upon you. This unquietness is a great hardship, but you may depend upon it, it is "the crook in the lot" of every person inheriting strong passions, strong sensibility, and an intellect strong and clear enough for a sense of right, and therefore strong enough to desire excellence. I feel a great desire to offer you some advice, but I feel utterly helpless in this matter, because I do not understand the particular difficulties you have to contend with; for of all the efforts of conjectural wisdom, that is the weakest and most foolish which undertakes to prescribe for spiritual wants which it does not understand, to guide by the glimmering light of an imperfect understanding a spirit too impetuous to take heed of its own certain experience, too impatient for success to wait for the opportunity of success.

I cannot help, however, reminding you that you have witnessed your effect over others for good and for evil, the effect which eternally follows a strong will over weaker wills. You have no doubt of the good or of the evil. Keep this idea forever in your mind, think constantly of the mixed nature of human beings, the part that lives, and the part that dies, of the

growth and progress of everything that is done for the one part, of the certain decay of everything done for the other. Do not analyze too closely either your own character or that of others. Few can stand this test, and if we were in the habit of doing this, we should find few persons we were capable of loving. Here it is faith is wanted, and must be exercised; that faith that trusts to a divine, invisible spark in every creature—that faith that is manifested by the affection that keeps it alive, and sometimes brings it to light. What human being ever died without *some friend* believing in his immortality—how few die, that to the eye of the world, seem even worthy of their brief existence here!

I strongly suspect, my dear friend, that you have a morbid feeling; how produced I cannot tell, but partly I fancy from irregularities of life—some excesses. I have heard you speak of sitting up all night to write, upon the strength of coffee, and I have heard too, not from you, of your injuring your eyes by watching and reading by night. Now do not undertake what you cannot do, what would kill any other man. Do not expect miracles. Be *moderate*. Give a reasonable portion of your time to your studies, in the faith that your knowledge will come in play in due time. Give some time to society, so as not to get misanthropic. Do good as you *have opportunity*, and don't try to turn the world over, for it is a devilish unwieldy thing, and in due time you shall reap if you faint not—honor, reputation and troops of friends. You have more than common strength of body and mind—use both steadily, and abuse neither.

Some extracts from a letter to Mr. Smith, half serious, half comic, like many of my brother's, may be placed here without the danger of being misinterpreted.

*March, 1843.*

My chief occupation this winter has led me to doubt the immortality of the soul. I do not mean that; for when I see a soul in a human creature, as I did the other day, at the exhibition of the blind by Dr. Howe, how it dilates the form by the love of knowledge, and irradiates the countenance by the honest exercise of the faculties, and a grateful sense of happiness, I cannot help believing in goodness, in progress, and of course in immortality, for *this* life of necessity cuts us off from the happiness, the possibility of which it reveals, and the desire of which it enkindles. I mean, therefore, only to say that I do not believe in immortality in the ordinary sense of that term as including all mankind, for the spirit of the beast goeth downward, and the mass appear to me to be actuated by this spirit, and no more worthy of another life than they are of this. Only think how long the world has existed, of the fair book of nature opened at the dawn of creation, and kept wide open to this day—of the individual and social wants of mankind—of the instinctive conscience shrinking from guilt, endeavoring to hide it, causing the very flesh to tremble at its discovery—of the recognized maxims of justice, in colleges and in every position of the civilized world—of the revelation of God's moral law—of the just maxims of the civil law—of modern free constitutions—of the increased facilities of knowledge, and the intercourse of nations—of the public provisions for the happiness of the destitute—of a class of moral teachers still supported among all people—and then consider how low the people still are in the scale of

intelligence, with what authority they invest the demagogues and predestined scamps among them as if they had but one want to be supplied—that of being flattered; one passion to gratify—vanity. These things force me to despond, if not to despair, about the people, and to think, almost, that it is quite expedient for the general welfare, that they should, in general, be damned. But I confess it is a somewhat partial view of the matter, and the result just now of the aforesaid exhibition of the blind in the Representatives' Hall, where, on the one side, I saw the Representatives delegated with power, for the most part ignorant, actuated by low passion, without knowledge enough to resist the most monstrous propositions of reprobates, and *happiness nowhere* but among those who, in the providence of God, were cut off from all the common sources of knowledge and enjoyment.

To T. C. H. Smith.

1844.

Who knows but some scamp, like Douglas, will get up a Mexican or Cuban war, and persuade the people that they can get gold mines, or meadow-lands, horses and cattle by a change of residence. The fact is, there are so many chances of plunder between the Atlantic and Pacific, that unless some old gladiator, like Benton, will keep watch and ward, and his eye on the glory of successful resistance to the scoundrel politicians that cater to the corrupt cupidity of the many, and cheat the simple and confiding out of their eye-teeth, I do not know what will become of us. My only trust is in Divine Providence. He has saved us in great perils, and I cannot think He will give us such a chance of greatness, and send us so many millions to profit by it, and then set us up as a laughing stock to the ill-begotten monarchs of the old world.

To the same.

1844.

I suppose my wife's letter has informed you of all our summer's experience, even what would be deemed unimportant by any friend less dear than one who so enters into your heart and mind, that he would like to hear of even the strapping and unstrapping of one's pantaloons, if that event should cause one to swear, or impatiently to forswear all forms and customs that have often such a wonderful effect to make the soul change places, and sometimes go into the belly, and then again into the corns on one's toe, as if they were the very seat of life.

But I am finishing my letter without saying one word on the subject that interests you most. Texas! Texas! That infernal plot which troubled me so much is for the present defeated. Some people, who on the first starting of a new proposition, are ready to go off at half cock, are coming round to something rational, something which will save them from contempt and hatred. The Baltimore nomination, with all the shame and infamy of it, is still, I think, attended with some good. It has taught some lessons not soon to be forgotten, and Mr. Van Buren, the injured, deserted candidate is, as he ought to be, the victim of that truckling spirit by which he has done as much as any man could do to barter the honest, manly freedom of the North for the favor of Southern slaveholders. But Polk and Texas, what a banner for the democracy to fight under! Was there ever anything like it? A parcel of crazy politicians at Washington, slave-holding politicians, get together, bluster, swear and lie; the timid, time-serving politicians of the North swallow the lie, and believe it; go to Baltimore, take ipecac in spoonfuls and pronounce it delicious; get up mass-meetings to manufacture this confectionary for the people. Some won't touch it, others who do, swallow it, and find it makes them



sick unto death. The party is, in the main, committed. Some will resist, some will hold back, and the consequence will be, I suppose, a four years' reign in which one great wickedness will be avoided, and a great many little wickednesses done, and if in the end a purer and better party should be formed, I shall be perfectly satisfied. I am willing to postpone the triumph of democracy till the cutthroats retire from the front ranks.

My brother gives his reasons to T. C. H. S. why he had advised him to edit a paper.

1846.

I had been considering the low state of the press—its power for good in the hands of an able, independent, courageous man; and I had a sort of longing to see some paper started somewhere, by somebody, that feared giving no offence to anybody but God. But, if all the prophets and apostles should establish an independent press, they would require capital and experience, or the government's printing, in order to get subscribers. What think you of Polk's message? I do not object to war to avoid any manner of disgrace, but I think a war to make Polk President for eight years, would be expending five hundred millions or more—wastefully!

I am a good deal interested about the New York Convention. I hope two things from it, a legal reform, especially in doing away with the English practice and putting down pettifoggers, and in regard to patronage and the power, under the present system, of making a few selfish devils the representatives of the democracy.

All this and more is written, in my brother's fine hand, in a small note, and it goes to show the perpetual activity of his brain on subjects of general interest to humanity.

Mr. Smith wrote to my brother that he had become the editor of a journal, to which he thus replies :

I have desired immensely that you should make this experiment. I am afraid that your temper will not stand the collisions of the Bar. It will serve you the best possible purposes if you write. Before you can *write, print and publish*, the passions will have time to cool. In writing, as in speaking, one may have the same earnestness of purpose, and the same strife for victory ; but he is not liable in the one case, as in the other, to forget his own honor and dignity, to lose his self-possession, and to cut out the heart of his adversary like an oyster.

An angry man in a public assembly, whether right or wrong, gets only the sympathy of his friends if he wounds his adversary, and the merits of the controversy are sunk in a personal dispute. It is not so with the editor of a paper. If he is strong and on the right side, he may be assailed by all the devils in hell, and out of hell too, and the cool and solemn judgment of the people will sustain him.

To T. C. H. Smith.

*Lenox, Dec. 22, 1846.*

MY DEAR FRIEND :

When I received your letter a few nights ago, bearing marks in every line, from beginning to end, of weakness of body and sadness of spirit, I was resolved not to let a day go by without telling you how melancholy for a short time, it made me ; for I think letters, if ever needed by a friend, are more than ever so when he is shut up alone with himself, unoccupied by business or external things, and when the sentiments he cherishes towards others and others for him, become the *material* part of his life. I remember well, when I was first stretched

upon a bed of sickness and pain, and perfectly helpless, I had an abundant opportunity of comparing different kinds of pleasure, or rather of estimating clearly the love of friends, and those things which give us happiness almost without alloy; coming to the conclusion that sickness, and even bodily pain was not a very bad thing, for it was only in those moments of helplessness and suffering that I could clearly realize in the tender affection and devotion of my friends, that my life made a part of theirs, that what is called business and occupation, all important as they are, to give quickness to the nerves and to develop the faculties, are nothing in comparison to the inward, undoubting conviction of disinterested affection.

With this remembrance, and your touching letter, as I said before, I intended to come right over to my office and tell you that my heart was with you, that you must get well, and tell me that you were so; but the mail that brought your letter brought six others, some of them from friends relating to vexatious difficulties and embarrassments that set my mind at work as to the mode of relief, and produced such a contrariety between my feelings and my judgment, that I postponed what then seemed to me the least important duty, and before I got to your letter in the order of time, business came on. Squire Tucker was clamorous for his bills of costs, lawyer's fees, etc., etc., till the very idea of taking up a pen became hateful to me. I have just completed my docket, delivered to the treasurer forty-three pages of figures and accounts, and *now* feel sorry that I did not let all the devilish things alone till I had spoken with you.

Is it not within your experience that what you should do, that you don't, and what you should not, that you do, and this even in relation to your dearest friends? If so, you will be sorry for me; if not, I can spare you the trouble of reproaching me, for

that necessary duty I generally discharge for myself, thereby sometimes saving my friends much pain and embarrassment.

I am sorry you are ill, because now I cannot write to you of several things that I would be glad to mention, for fear that they may have a medicinal taste, and make you throw up my letter altogether; nevertheless, I must allude to some. And first—the speech of the Governor of Virginia proposing a *bold stroke*—the violent removal of all the free blacks from the State. This thing, Cave Johnson's proposition to establish an inquisition in the post-office, and sundry like things that are frequently occurring at the South, and proceeding from their public men, show what an excellent thing the institution of slavery is to qualify men for affairs in a republican country. These men might as well be placed in the tower of Babel as have their advice followed. However, I am not sure that the Virginia Governor's project cannot be carried out. It would be undoubtedly the duty of the other States to prohibit their entrance except for a passage through. If they start East, they should go to the Atlantic—if West, to the Pacific, and on arriving at either coast, they should undoubtedly be pushed into the sea. This could be done I think, under the Constitution, which gives validity to the acts of a State, in every other State in the Union. The Legislature of Virginia could make it the duty of free negroes to walk down to the sea-coast, declare it a constructive invasion if they did not do it, and call out the military to suppress it, or they might declare it a capital offence in a free negro, being within sight of the sea, not to walk in, and the mode of punishment, to be thrown off the dock. . . . I never see — without wondering, that a man, so just, so kind, so scrupulously upright in his dealings with others, should have in some respects so low an opinion of mankind, and especially of female kind; for

though there are fools and hypocrites and devils among the latter, they are that portion of the race without which the millennium would never have been thought of, and which will infallibly, in God's good time, bring it about.

To T. C. H. Smith.

*Dec. 27, 1847.*

I am going to send to our Legislature a petition to secure to married women their earnings against husbands and their creditors. My object includes the wives of all the drunken rascals in Massachusetts.

The main difficulty will be to keep the thing out of the Judiciary Committee whose chief merit lies in stopping all reforms in the law. If you can help me to the heads of an argument I shall be greatly obliged, for when one has nothing to guide him but an instinct of justice, he is not prepared for the sophistries which have kept the world about as much in the dark as if the great end of human ambition was to snuff out as many candles as possible.

How it fared with my brother's petition appears in the following extract from a letter to me.

What an infamous thing it is that a law wanted for the nourishment and subsistence of the weakest and best part of the people should not go right through the Legislature like grist through a mill. Instead of that, they have thrown my grist into the pond, toll and all, d—n 'em! But thank Mr. Loring and Mr. Bartlett. I wish one such man were in the Legislature. He would throw all the nasty little common law lawyers in with the bones of William the Conqueror, where they belong! So much for acting like a fool and being advised to go to the Judiciary Committee, in which I had no faith.

To T. C. H. S.

— has a quick eye for defects of character, and perhaps not quite so much toleration for human infirmities as human nature requires. He has a particular aversion to all pretences, and does not seem to consider enough that the lying in the world is to cover up defects, and vices, and follies that people are ashamed of, but do not know how to avoid. He is perfectly honest, and slightly uncharitable, which makes him reserved, somewhat too much so. He is, however, a genuine, true and capital fellow. . . . I have more letters to write, and besides I must visit a little convert that I have made in the jail.

This alludes to a poor little outcast, a scion of a wretched family who haunted the outskirts of Stockbridge. Charles for a long time went every Sunday to the jail, carrying a basket full of creature comforts, and a heart full of spiritual food. The boy, who had been sent to prison for stealing a *jackknife*, took the bread imperishable as eagerly as the apples and nuts, and to my brother's great satisfaction, exhibited symptoms of being a real convert. The conversion, however, lasted no longer than the boy's imprisonment, as will be seen by the following letter.

To William Minot, Jr.

*Lenox, Sept. 28, 1847.*

. . . . . I heard no news at Stockbridge, except that Leonard Wheeler, the only member of my House of Correction family for whose conversion I ever labored, and who was pardoned as a true convert to the Christian religion, on my petition, was lodged in the Troy jail, after sundry thefts and burglaries committed in company with his father. The little fellow did spend hours in prayer in the prison, and took us all in by a device that I never heard of before. His petitions were

all in the name of the Lord, but the little scoundrel used the word all the way through for *devil*, and nobody suspected him. So much for my philanthropic efforts. However, it only confirms a suspicion I all along had, that philanthropic labors were the poorest in the world, a silly kind of dissipation, without any rational expectation of profit, and without the merit of any one of the vices, the practice of which, for the time being, is generally agreeable.

To T. C. H. S.

1852.

Your words of affection (being genuine and no mistake) enter into the marrow of my soul, and improve the quality of life. Last night, we had our usual Sunday night gathering, with the addition of some friends from New York. We had sacred music also, of which I am very fond, and nice young people from Cambridge, friends of Ellery—Bangs and Professor Child, who have been having the grandest time with the girls for ten days, breakfasting with my sister, picnicking in the woods, and making charades. We had no spirit-rappings, but you were present with me on the sofa, and I had the nicest time with you imaginable. How delicious they are, those spiritual moments when the absent, whom you do really love, are present with their indescribable look and their smile and their words and their tone which needs no affidavit of merits, and which cannot be sworn out of one's belief—it is too good. I got serious though at the end, thought of you in the wild West, wrangling with worldly wretches, and perhaps seriously thinking of blowing out some scoundrel's brains.

To T. C. H. S.

1853.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I came here, *i.e.*, to Woodbourne, bringing with me for Kate and Bessie, your note to my wife from that strange country<sup>1</sup> and people, who seem to have become civilized for the purpose of practising savage arts with more effect. How it was possible for my wife first, and Kate and Bessie afterwards, to read that note laughing, I could not imagine, for it seemed to me that a robber's cave was a far safer place to be in, and you must know that I have not exactly the feeling about you that Mrs. Washington had about her husband, that wherever he was "he was safe!" I hope that we shall hear again soon that you have neither been poisoned nor shot. . . . .

We have just received elaborate dispatches from Will<sup>2</sup> announcing a sudden change of plans, and explaining at large his reasons for entering on an entire new course of duty. It seems that one of his fellow countrymen was taken ill, and was ordered to Italy. He could not go alone. Nobody could be found to go with him. Will had conceived the greatest affection for him, and that respect for his character which led him to think that the saving of his life would be a far greater benefit to mankind than anything else that was like to turn up, and so, being persuaded that we should approve of this charitable mission, he abandoned the University for the present, a trip to Paris which he had much at heart, and went off with borrowed money, fully satisfied that he had a mission, and that Providence and his friends would be well satisfied. I was somewhat struck aback with his giving up his original plan and ours that he should study Latin and learn German, and turn trav-

<sup>1</sup> Texas.

<sup>2</sup> His son, then studying law at a German University.



elling nurse. I think his mother is reconciled by his motives, and finally, after thirty-six hours worrying, I submit without murmuring to what I cannot help, and strive for faith that Providence is far wiser in his ends than we, and that he knows best the means of bringing them about. It is certainly quite possible that the reflection and discipline of this assumed care and responsibility may furnish Will with truer notions of the ends of living, and better knowledge how to accomplish them, than the new names of things he would get by studying the German language. But, after all, it seems a little queer to me, and I cannot help thinking how devilish funny it would seem if another man's boy had done the same thing. Don't tell my wife about this note. She will think I have turned traitor to my own blood, and she will inwardly sigh at my irreverent treatment of a matter which, whether wisely conceived or not, has doubtless been sanctified by this time by her love and prayers.

So fathered and so mothered, Will's sacrificing everything else to a mission of love and mercy was not strange.

In a very humorous letter to T. S., written, as C. says, "Monday morning before I am dressed" he writes,

I do not think anything has pleased me quite so much lately, as your last letter to my wife; more than all the rest, that you would not lend a poor devil one hundred dollars when you had not got it, delighted me.

To T. C. H. Smith.

*Sept. 10, 1853.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

About a week ago we got your letter of August 21st, on Christian Institutions. My wife read it to me as I was driving her to inquire after Mr. —, who has been miserably sick. I

have hardly laughed so heartily since you left us. I cannot tell why, but I had forebodings of evil about you, and there was something so funny in the contrast between the feeling of opening your letter, and reading it, and so characteristic in your stopping to write a treatise on moral philosophy instead of riding at full gallop, without hat or wig, to escape from yellow fever, that I can not, after the lapse of time, think of that letter without laughing. I feel quite at ease about one thing, that you will not bring on the fever by fear or anxiety—which I fancy is a common cause of it. After all, I wish you were clean away from it. I felt a strong desire to answer your letter, but on second thought I concluded that there were about twenty sentences in it that would require a sheet of foolscap each, and you would probably have deemed it all *foolscap*.

Your letter received last night, of August 29th, has put me in great spirits on your account; first, about your fortunes, and secondly, that if they fail, the charm of your identity will not. I do not know how I can ever look your father in the face again. He told me to secure the lot above the church for him. I thought it an accidental, spasmodic enthusiasm with him, not signifying much, and moreover, that there was no occasion for any special precautionary providence in relation to that matter, and though it has crossed my mind a hundred, if not a thousand times, I did nothing about it. My amazement was great the other day when I was told that one hundred and twenty-five acres had been bought there, and that the purchasers were in treaty for four or five hundred acres more, which I believe has since been bought. The title and character of conquests is all changed. It used to be barbarians from the North overrunning the South with fire and sword—now the effeminate Southrons are overrunning our Northern possessions, hunting us in our

forests, sweeping our hills away, and usurping our dwelling places by bribery and corruption. People, so big that they take the whole Pacific coast for elbow room, are coming this summer to Lenox for mountain air and mountain scenery, and the Lord knows what, and our villagers are all agog, first, for fear they shall not sell their land at all, and secondly, for fear they shall not ask enough for it. Everybody is in a state of excitement, and everybody pleased with the probable large accession of rich people to build up the town, make business, lighten taxes, except your particular friends who would a *little* prefer that this simple, quiet little village should remain without locusts, or even the great Pacific Steamship Co. and their wives and little ones. I perceive in your last an unwonted expression about your wife. You may *let on* as much as you choose; she is an extraordinary person of rare loveliness, and you know it, and you know we know it.

Elizabeth says she must *take time* to answer your last two letters. So it seems she means to try it. Well, when she has done that, I will ask her to try and invent a soul and body metre, with attachments and registers, so that anybody can tell when it is stuck into a man, how much there is in him of the earthly, how much of the heavenly, and *if he can*, whether he will be likely, in given circumstances, to go right upward like Elijah, in a chariot of fire, or down like Peter, souse into the ocean.

In the meantime I am—I am constrained to be, and think it highly probable I shall remain,

Yours most truly, gratefully and affectionately,

CHAS. SEDGWICK.

I have thought it best to place all the letters to Mr. Smith in one series, and I must now go back to give some of my brother's family letters belonging to the same period.

To his daughter Bessie.

*Congress Hall, July 20, 1842.*

DEAREST BELL:

If happiness results from external condition, I should have it now without the trouble of writing to you ; for being in Saratoga without anything to do or to suffer, with a clean shirt on, which I take it is perfection in cut and make, and in my flannel gown which protects me from the wind, and is good for rheumatism, so light that it is no burden in the hottest weather, and with a luxurious belt that nobody but your mother could invent, I should make one of that happy floating population which moves with the current of circumstances, which rejoices in every breeze without caring for the direction of the wind, and which rejoices equally in a calm, being always ready for repose. But, dear Bessie, young as you are, it is not necessary you should have studied either moral or mental philosophy to have learned the difference between those pleasures of existence which belong to every living creature and come from the outward world, and that inner life which is peopled by our thoughts; that world of our own which springs into life when some bitter memory or some pleasing hope suddenly comes over us, when thoughts of the loved and the absent fill us with joy or sadness, and when in the midst of a crowd with our ears and eyes wide open, we neither hear nor see. I don't know that I have ever felt much more strongly the difference between the two worlds, or the sudden transition from the one to the other, than since I have been here.

The gaiety and lightness of Saratoga I do really like, and I

do not much object to its frivolity and folly, for I see in it a great compensation to those who at home are weary and worn with care, and, if possible, a still more merciful promise for those who, in the variety and excitement of a crowd, for a time forget their own insignificance; to say nothing of the real advantages of the place which to some gives health, and to others that consequence among strangers which they cannot get from friends and acquaintances, and to almost all some spring of life; but for me, I could not enjoy it long, unless I were staying to wash out an ugly rheumatism. I cannot long keep my thoughts from my people, and without feeling the chord that binds me to them constantly pressing upon me, life seems to be wasting away. I got yesterday from your mother poor F.'s letter, and it seemed to take all the goodness out of the Congress Springs. It made me very sad—neither fire, nor shipwreck, nor any of the calamities of life, not even death, seem to me so melancholy as the failure of happiness with such a rare combination of mental and moral power, such a capacity to do and to suffer, such real goodness and such power of loving. But, dear Bell, it is not fair that I should fill up my letter in this strain. I will try to tell you something of the place and the people. Gossip, you know, is the bread of life here, and if a man cannot eat that and relish it, he has a kind of moral dyspepsia which entirely unfits him for the pleasures of the place. I have labored hard here to get the Captain to make love to Miss Swaim, daughter of Panacea, who has two children and an estate of \$800,000. I have got partly over the disgust one would naturally feel towards a man whose genius was all expended in inventing a quack medicine, and whose happiness was all derived from successfully imposing it upon a credulous multitude at five dollars a bottle—molasses, and water, and

sarsaparilla,—because, upon talk with him, I have ascertained that he really believes in its virtue; that he believes it has cured terrible diseases which nothing else would cure; and because he has given it to the poor.

To his son William.

*Dec. 22, 1842.*

DEAR WILLIAM:

Do you miss me? I am not as happy from home as some are; anxiety about my children sometimes troubles me, but I do not regard it unless I have some fear that they will be unfaithful or not do right, and then I am tormented as badly as poor Dives for the want of cold water. Do right, dear boy, be bold, speak the truth in your heart and in your lips, be faithful to *every* promise, and you will do all that is in the power of mortal—all that is in the power of my darling and *only* son to make me happy. Yours, most affectionately,

C. S.

To Mrs. Susan Sedgwick after the death of her second grandson.

*Jan. 22, 1843.*

MY DEAR UNHAPPY SISTER SUSAN:

I had heard before I got your letter, of your immense loss; and though my mind had been for a good while turned, and pretty effectually turned, from looking forward to any considerable happiness in this world, I could not help feeling your bitter disappointment. So fine a child as that of Theodore's is rarely seen. He was as remarkable for his look of health as for that of nobleness and beauty, and it is not so common an event for our children to go before us, that we can be prepared for it, or help being surprised by it. It seems, at first, as unnecessary as

it is unnatural ; a waste of the best influences that operate upon us ; a positive total loss of happiness without any compensation ; a throwing away of the love which approaches nearer to absolute purity than almost any other sentiment we have ; a sort of sealing up of that fountain of sweet waters which keeps us alive and which refreshes our spirits, and keeps us from desponding, when otherwise care and trouble and sorrow would weigh us down. The religious spirit is perhaps as much shocked at first by such an event as any other, for if there be anything to carry our thoughts gratefully to Heaven, it is the possession of an innocent and beautiful child laid upon our bosom, whose heart lies next our heart and is ready to swell and beat with love and joy the moment it perceives the relation between us ; with faculties to perceive that relation before its voice can utter a word, and with a power beyond anything else human, to excite us to our duty and to keep us from sin.

To have this cup, from which we drink and live, suddenly dashed from our lips, seems too hard and cruel a fate, and we need the teaching of much sorrow to get our minds at all right on the subject — to believe that the Being, who holds over us the power of life and death, can be a purely beneficent power, that the same wisdom and love which made us parents, severs our children from us. But it must be so. There must be another world, and it is because we have not entered and cannot enter within the veil, that this one seems so full of mysteries, of temptations which we cannot resist, of death which we are not prepared for and cannot avert, and of disappointments worse than death. Is it possible so to educate a human being as to give him necessarily and implicitly a faith in the life to come ? If it be so, our ignorance in this respect is our greatest misfortune, and the greatest drawback from the value of our

existence here. I have no words to express the value I attach to such a faith; for though it cannot prevent wounds or bruises, or bitter sorrows, it can convert them all into blessings, and make all the difference between a child-like trust and a consuming anxiety.

I recollect, dear Susan, some of the things you said about your boy before you went to New York, and I know the feeling towards him with which you went there, and I fear more than I can well express, that this great disappointment of your darling hopes may prove too much for your already over-taxed spirits and frame. Resist this sorrow, I pray you, for your own sake, for the honor of your faith in God and his good providence, for the sake of poor Sara, and your afflicted son, for the sake of dear Rie into whose still heart the sorrows of others so deeply enter and more sadly work than is visible to careless eyes. You know, my dear sister, the medicine of a cheerful spirit; you are not aware, perhaps, how much your children need it from you, if it be possible. Theodore's thoughts must be greatly engrossed about his business, and his strength used up by it. If he comes home when he needs every possible aid of cheerfulness, and finds you all gloomily yielding to sorrow, he will go back to his necessary work without refreshment. And poor Sara, how much does she need every possible help to cheerfulness.

Think, if you can, of the pleasure and happiness of that little boy's life, short as it was. Is it not better than if he had not been born? Keep your health, my dear sister, for it is important to us all. Let us enjoy what we can together, and live in hopes that our final and complete happiness, however delayed, cannot be prevented.



To Mrs. Susan Sedgwick.

March 31, 1843.

I have lived long enough to learn that the love of the good below, is like that of the good above; that it goes forth of itself and of necessity, and dwells forever, wherever it can be received and *cherished*, though the object of it may wear a fool's cap and feather. If it reaches the heart as yours does mine, it must stick there. Your nature and your habit make me feel secure, and until I turn kidnapper, or something else quite out of my line and beyond my present purpose, and whilst life lasts, I expect to be dear to you as I am at present.

I am not surprised by your want of leisure, on the contrary I can hardly understand how the forms of affectionate intercourse are kept up between the town and country. When I am in town I can hardly get time even to think of my friends, except between the hour of waking and dressing, and I go from place to place with much the same feeling that I attribute to a milkman's horse, not knowing who is to get the milk, and not at all thinking that it will turn into nourishment anywhere. I suppose, however, that those who live in town, who are forever crossing the street between the pole of one omnibus and the wheels of another, who traverse the side-walks and coolly calculate the angle of a descending avalanche of snow, and step over the pitfalls that are left to tumble in wood and little children, without ever stopping to swear at the rascals who leave them uncovered, have the nerves of sensation bound together and tied down, after the manner of fastening the tendons of the foot by the cord over the instep, and that they are cool, and methodical, and orderly, and even write letters. But I never expect this of a transient resident in town, and when I get such a proof of mental tranquillity and social feeling, it delights me.

To Miss Maria Sedgwick.

April 3, 1843.

DEAR RIE :

I had heard it before mysteriously whispered, that you and your mother were going to make the *tour of Europe* together this spring, but I did not quite believe it, till Theodore told me of it that day. Don't go, Rie, till I get to New York to see you off, as far as the Hook at least. How your decision has damped some White Hills and Maine lake plans of mine! Ah, well! you will grow younger, and I too, perhaps, for by Jupiter, I can hardly feel older than I have for two years past, and next year perhaps we will try the White Hills together, and then you can tell me how they compare with the Alps.

Pray write me about your plans. Who takes charge of baggage? who pays bills and keeps the key of the medicine chest? You do it, Rie; get a blouse and a pair of trowsers, and crop your hair, and take a velvet cap with an upright or downright front piece of leather, and a rattan, and five barrel revolving pistol in your belt; they are all good to go on deck with, and keep off sea sickness, and beggary, and Lazzaroni, and then what a pleasant surprise it will be to your mother every night when you put your chivalry off, and your night gown on, and turn into her own sweet Rie again.

Some such course as this I am sure you will adopt, for I understand you forswear all but each other's protection, and how can one woman protect another, without a blouse or a pistol, or both?

If you do take a pistol, don't let your mother have it; she is already excited about the sea and Mc'Kenzie, and she may fancy a mutiny when there is none, and take the pilot for the chief mutineer, and blow his brains out, and there is no law giving passengers such a right, in the *merchant service*.

I presume you are going for adventures, and will write an account of them—who should, so soon as two women who take the first leap from the top of society into the depths of buccaneering? Dear Rie, this matter is so comical, and my time is so short, that I can not write gravely to-day. I shall do it doubtless before you sail and perhaps answer your last kind letter. When you sail I shall turn Puseyite, I shall go as you do for faith alone, but the connection of these two things, though intimately connected—your sailing and my faith, I have not time now to explain.

To his wife.

*Lenox, June 2, 1843.*

MY DEAR LIZZIE :

How could you go off, leave me to sleep *alone*, and order the stove taken away at this inclement season? thus depriving me of three necessities of life at once—a present steady mind, your love, and animal heat. It was too bad, and one night I determined to punish you with sweet revenge; I lay all night with cold feet, quite doubtful whether the cold would not extend before morning to the vital parts, and leave me in bed a frozen monument; for you to look upon when you came home. My project did not succeed; I survived that night, and fearing I should live through and torment nobody but myself, which thought wonderfully takes away the sweetness of revenge, I have since taken to my flannel gown, that never-failing comforter of old age, and with that, two blankets and a bed-quilt, I am sorry to say I have been quite comfortable. . . . I trust you have ceased to vex yourself about my letter; without being at all ill I have been somewhat disordered for the last fortnight, and not being able to sleep as usual, I have

been very cross; and what is more natural than that I should break out on you, the only person I know in the world that would not retaliate if you could, whose clear eye can see through a thick covering of sin and folly and ingratitude the love that really exists in spite of it; whose tender compassions fail not. I will mention one thing to you from which you can judge of the degree of my discomfort; I received the sweetest letter from Kate, by Willie, which I have never been able to answer, because I would not betray myself to that sweet child. Consider too, that I have not quarrelled once in your absence with Bessie, Will or Gracie, and then pardon the one sin I have committed against you. On the whole I am disposed to adopt Fanny's advice, not judge myself too hardly, but consider myself a wonderful example of restraining grace. Indeed, Lizzie, as the world goes, I think you ought to consider yourself fortunate, and be daily thankful, considering how much selfishness there is at the bottom of my nature, how much it has been fostered by coostring friends and the opportunities of self-indulgence, my small faculty for worthy pursuits, and my lack of industry in those for which I was designed, etc., etc., etc., that on the whole I have tormented you so little.

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, June 7, 1843.*

MY DEAREST KATE:

My hair is getting thin, my head is rather hot, and you have no business to be heaping coals of fire on it as you did by your letter received last night, without my having answered another written more than a fortnight ago. It is a shame I know, my darling, that your love should be unacknowledged, and I confess I have felt for several days somewhat like a thief in ap-

appropriating to myself, as if it of right belonged to me, your free gift without even saying so much as I thank you. The fact is, your letter by Willie made a peculiar impression upon me, and I intended promptly to answer it from a full and grateful heart. I had rather a blue fit, and was out of sorts, and fully persuaded that nothing was wanting but restraining grace till the wind should change. I therefore contented myself with behaving in as decent and becoming a manner as possible towards my household, and determined to disturb as little as possible by my own black bile the quiet current that lay beyond the boundaries of my own inclosure. I think I have succeeded; not a cloud has disturbed the sunshine of the young breasts about me, and my own atmosphere has become quite clear again. . . . I think that Mr. and Mrs. Minot ought to be duly sensible of the forbearance that is now practised towards them, and grateful for this unusual interval of more than a fortnight without any new interlopers from Stockbridge or Lenox. Don't fail to impress this upon them, and let their minds be piously and devoutly exercised by this striking mercy of social abstinence. . . . I suppose your mother will reserve till you come here the thousand details she will have to give you to prove why —— and —— cannot be happy together, a thing about as much to be depended on as guy ropes of cotton bobbin. Poor ——! she has tried ——'s strength, moral, mental and physical in every way; at every trial the cord has snapped. The poor child makes a new tie, and wonders still that the rope of sand, originally incapable of holding together even without a strain, a thousand times severed, and every time weakened, will not bear a new pull. . . . When I think of the relation of master and servant, or rather employer and employed, just, and natural, and right as it is, with all the con-

ditions fulfilled on both sides, service rendered, and wages paid, and yet how, without complaint on either side, there is often a complete failure of happiness to the servant, or nearly so, simply because it is God's decree that man shall not live by bread alone, that consideration, sympathy, respect, are all essential to life, even in this condition; when I think of this, and then of poor ———, with a power of loving and a longing for love quite indescribable, parching with thirst, and insanely and pertinaciously planting herself by a broken cistern that can hold *no water*, it is very, very distressing to me. If it were possible to suppose that her affection could survive her trials, that by any devotion or perseverance he could be wrought upon to comprehend or return it, even at the close of a long life of suffering, I could not recommend separation. But a separation of heart, of soul, of life, is inevitable, and why keep up this seeming bodily union without the possibility of turning the mind to any worthy pursuits? All that she can hope for is estrangement and indifference; can any hell exceed that in her near relation to him?

To me.

*Dec. 5, 1843.*

MY VERY DEAR MISS CATHERINE SEDGWICK:

I left Philadelphia on Sunday evening and received a letter at New York from Mrs. Charles, expressing great disapprobation of my silence towards her, and I received from the author of *Hope Leslie* on my return home, a letter with a similar complaint, and both evidently written with a very jealous feeling of regret. Now both these letters greatly pleased me, for having enjoyed far beyond my deserts and beyond the expectation of any reasonable man, the affection of

my friends, and feeling sure of that, I am not in the least disturbed by an occasional flare-up on their part in this respect; "old dogs can't learn new tricks"—or if they do they can't frighten their masters by them. I have had love from the beginning, but I have felt a positive want of what, to a man of my age, is far more important, to wit—the respect of my friends, and as both these letters contain unequivocal evidence of that, I am satisfied. Do you recollect I made a virtuous resolution some months ago to be sparing of my letters? and the most meritorious act of my life, that which involved both repentance and amendment of a great sin, shows in its result how much a man's friends cherish his vices—that if he would cure himself of them, he must not only suffer a terrible wrench from old habits, but must stand alone in his self respect; so much to admonish you of your weaknesses.

This letter was written immediately after a visit to our dear friend Mrs. Kemble in Philadelphia.

It was early in her separation from her husband and before she obtained a divorce, and contains a closely written foolscap sheet, many details of her sorrows and harassments, and abounds with expressions of my brother's admiration and sympathy.

*Lenox, January 5, 1844,  
quite late P.M.*

MY DEAR KATE:

I have been all day working at a return to the Legislature, of a clerk's "fees from all sources whatsoever," the object of which is to cut the clerks' throats, and the effect of which I suppose will be to economize in this branch of the public service, and I mention it to you with a request that you will be prepared to appropriate from your surplus revenue, whatever

shall prove deficient next year in the clerk's receipts. You are somewhat dependent upon the clerk's being good-natured, and the clerk's good-nature depends greatly on his having a plenty to consume and considerable to *waste*.

Bessie is in a way of improvement, having had suffering enough for the last four or five days from a boil *in her ear* to make a saint of her. She has been uncommonly patient, and is now hoping that to-night the infernal thing will break. She is easy at times, and then falls asleep. The last night, however, she slept but little, and the consequence was that Frolic did not mind me this morning, and I horse-whipped him, the next best thing for discipline to stringing right up at the yard-arm—proof—he has stuck to me in a worshipping manner ever since, lying down by me in the office, and at my feet at dinner. To-night I shall take him into my chamber—why? Because my wife scolded me this morning for cruelty, and to-night I shall humble her, for she will wish to have Frolic sleep in a snowbank on the wing stoop.

I have been trying since I came from New York to make my hair grow. I try the experiment every night on that portion which I did not comb out in the morning, but I find it's no go. I have abandoned that undertaking and shall now try to grow in grace, which is better suited to my age. I will try to look as well as I can, and if my friends are not suited they must furnish me a wig or a skull-cap.

Do you believe one word of that savage Nezahual Coyoth? He was as wise and pious and wicked as the Lord's chosen servant David, and that I doubt not was his Christian name.

Last night, Elizabeth got out of the omnibus, turned over in a snow-drift, broke Mary Anne's back, etc., etc., and had a good time.



I am too tired to think or write anything but nonsense, but I don't like to have another mail go at the present rate of travelling, without telling you that we are all, save Bessie and Mary Anne, in prime health, and these two I trust will be better to-morrow.

We have seen nobody from S——, but Mr. P. and E. on New Year's day, both bright and in spirits. When this coincidence happens, it always seems to me as if this state of probation was really a good thing, and for a short time, I am entirely free from the anxieties that sometimes play the devil with my spirits.

Give my love to M. P., and tell her that Bessie sympathizes greatly with her pain and deafness, and begins to wonder at and admire her patience and virtue, which, she says, if she does not recover her hearing, she shall try to imitate. Give my love to all. Be angry at this letter, but sin not by scolding me for it, and next time I will write slower, and if I can, better.

Ever yours,

C. S.

To me.

*January 7, 1844.*

. . . . . I thank you very much for sending the secretary and *seeing* that the slab was all right. The pleased expressions that I got from William and Kate about it have let me into a secret that every man in moderate circumstances ought to know, when he gives away a daughter in marriage. If I had given Kate \$1000 or \$1500, it would doubtless have been considered a scrimped and mean portion, and the mortgage upon my place for the money would never have been taken into the account, whereas no portion at all but sixty

dollars the year afterwards is looked upon, on all hands, as an act of the most unquestionable generosity. . . . On Thursday last Brother Gale, the principal saint and chief pillar of the Methodist Church, died at the age of 82.

Our little church to-day has been crowded with people. It was pleasant to see how many came together to honor this good old man. He was a saint fifty years ago when he was prosperous and rich; cheated and impoverished, he has remained a saint ever since, without repining or reviling. His chief benefactor and faithful friend through all his troubles, has been my friend Perry, the butcher, who was no otherwise related to him than by marrying the daughter of his second wife by a former husband.

To his daughter Bessie.

1844.

DEAREST BELLE:

I wanted to hold you in my lap last night exceedingly; I wanted to write to you too; but after writing all day in the office letters of business, after I went home I did *not feel like it*.

The last great excitement here was produced by Brother Gale's good looks and red cheeks after his death.

He was 82 years old and suffered much in his sickness and stopped breathing, a combination and coincidence that produced a strong and somewhat general impression that he was dead, but his daughter could not suffer him to be buried on the fourth day, until he had been galvanized and put in hot water. I think after all Mrs. H. would never have felt quite right, if the Aztec Washington had not taken his heart out

to examine it, and put it back in such a manner as to prevent all chance of his breathing again.

The church on the Hill is rent asunder by disagreement and difficulties about the new minister. Mr. Shepard won't come. It is well for society that they are not all church members. There would be no harmony except at funerals, and I am not sure then but the burial would have to be by stealth and privately, to prevent quarrelling about the pall-bearers, and who should conduct the procession!

To me.

*Lenox, Feb. 21, 1844, P. M.*

MY DEAR KATE:

Your letter of the 18th, following so closely on the last, and received with such unprecedented dispatch and informing me of Lizzie's being down stairs and in spirits, has so elevated mine, that though I had just sat down, after standing and writing all day at my desk, *I cannot* delay writing to you a *cheerful* letter.

Wednesday morning—Bravo! I had just finished a sentence, the prelude to a long letter, and up came Ensign fresh from Boston, and next the Rev. Orville Dewey, and so my enthusiasm was forced in a new direction. Mr. Dewey passed the evening with us. He was in fine spirits, and never more agreeable, and we enjoyed his visit extremely. Smith is with us, and Mr. Dewey's visit was a great treat to him. He was charmed with some of his opinions, particularly respecting Brownson.

I had some talk with Mr. Dewey upon the subject of Texas, upon which I found that his mind was made up, against the annexation of course, but in entire ignorance of the statement of the case by the clamorous advocates of annexation, banded to-

gether through the whole Southwest. I have seen a recent pamphlet upon this subject, by Senator Walker of Mississippi, which has filled me with alarm, in which it is stated that every administration since Adams, and including Mr. Adams, has endeavored to obtain it by treaty with Mexico.

There are given about forty reasons for the annexation, the principal of which are, that it is essential to the preservation of the Union, of the tariff, or any tariff, to the defence of the country in case of war, to the existence of the South as a portion of the Union, and to the prosperity of the Western, Northern and Middle States, inasmuch as it will furnish a home market for the products of the soil, mines, and manufactures, greatly superior to all the markets of the world, and because it holds out the *only possible chance of the final extinction of slavery*, in which case the slaves will recede from the North to the South as they have done since the purchase of Louisiana, go to Texas, through Texas to Mexico, and finally be absorbed with the black population of Mexico, and Southern and Central America, where they can live and thrive without being a degraded caste. To enforce this part of the argument many tables are given, designed to show that the slaves are infinitely better off, in all respects, than the free blacks in the Northern States, where, according to the returns of the last census, which I have recently somewhat examined, it appears that the number of idiots, blind and insane blacks in some of the towns of Maine exceed the whole number to be found in those towns, and that the paupers, idiot, insane, blind, and in prison, are equal to about one in twelve of the whole number.

I am afraid of the pamphlet, because it shows a combined, persevering and determined effort to obtain Texas, because it is ingeniously addressed to the cupidity of the northern people,

to the fears of the politicians, because there are many plausible statements and calculations in favor of the measure, the fallacy of which is not readily seen, because it forebodes all possible evils to the country, if the measure is defeated, and more than all other reasons, there appears to be a perfect supineness at the North in relation to the subject, as appears by the fact that no notice has been taken of the solemn appeal of Mr. Adams and some other members of Congress at the last session to arouse the people to resist it, and altogether I am sadly afraid that the South will spring a trap upon us while we are asleep, and that to prevent the danger of a possible war between two nations whose interests are all in favor of peace, we are to provide for the existence and spread of slavery through all time. I have given Mr. Dewey the pamphlet, and I hope he will read it carefully. I have seen no mention of it, and yet I presume it has spread its poison everywhere.

To-day there is to be a great celebration of the Washingtonians, in Lenox, and if they do not behave better than their agent Stainsby, and their organ *The Cataract* in Stockbridge, they will get to be a greater nuisance than all the drunkenness we have ever had. The Lenox Washingtonians had a meeting to prepare for their reception, and according to the custom in other places determined to take the Goths into their own houses, and proposed to me to take twenty-five! I not only refused to take any of them, but said so much about the impropriety of the thing, that they were satisfied they had committed a blunder, and finally I agreed to run the risk of being called mean, and took the responsibility of recommending to them to go to the tavern, on the only occasion when they could do anything towards making amends for the losses they had occasioned. So that evil has been corrected in Lenox.

I thought we had sufficient opportunity for hospitality to strangers, without indulging the Washingtonians in their selfish spite against the tavern keepers.

P. M. I have been to the Washingtonian Meeting. Boynton, a Washingtonian, made a good speech, and the only one that will do much good. He attacked his own people for their uncharitableness and vulgarity, and told them if they did not avoid their infamous and indecent personalities against all the respectable people who differ from them, he would sail under some other flag. They felt this. It is the first public expression of disapprobation they have ever received from one of their own members.

Little Jessie (my Blenheim spaniel) has just sprung up to send her love, and pray me not to take to heart your praise of Eliza Swain on her account. The little thing stands by me at dinner, sits in my lap at night, and comes every morning to my room.

To Mrs. Jane Sedgwick.

*C. Pleas, Lenox, March 5, 1844.*

MY DEAR JENNIE:

I have received another of your sweet letters by Mr. Channing—thank you. I am sorry that Hal will sit up, and smoke till two o'clock—very—because he does not seem to me to have a superfluity of strength, which, in one class, is kept down in the workshop and the field, and in another, (Hal's class), by late hours, tobacco, etc., but it can't be helped. I may be mistaken, and you ought not to be anxious, for the young can only learn moderation by excess. There is prodigious elasticity in youth; besides, his over-estimate of the merits of tobacco will probably be corrected by a fit of sickness, a shake of the nerves, or something else, before it seriously

touches the seat of life. It is odd, however, that the principle of faith should take such a queer turn in young folks, as to make them believe what everybody who has grown old considers absolutely untrue, and *disbelieve* in the common experience of mankind. The greatest of all the idiosyncrasies that I know anything of, is that which makes every individual see himself only in the respects in which he differs from the race; never, or seldom, in those in which he resembles the rest. It is, perhaps, owing to this, that we work nobody's experience but our own into our web of life.

I am surprised, amazed, confounded by what you tell me of O'Sullivan. Has he ever read Doctor Channing's letter to Clay, on the annexation of Texas? Walker makes a stronger case than I have ever seen made before, but the greater portion of his argument was anticipated and annihilated by Channing, and those points which Channing did not touch are perfectly answerable. "Bears no relation to the subject of slavery!" Gracious God! a proposition to introduce six new *slave States*, bears no relation to the subject of slavery? What on earth does O'Sullivan mean?

The time draws nigh for Susy to come home. I am desirous to ascertain the effect of this upon my relations with Stockbridge, which are nearly *dissolved*. I look upon your last migration as a secret plot, which you dare not disclose, to cut the country altogether; of course, I watch whatever takes place in New York, the play, etc., to see if I can see in your *children* or *yourselves*, any signs of misgiving as to the propriety of your step, any latent remorse, any sign of repentance and reformation. Alas! I see none. O'Sullivan is going to Texas. I am going to Oregon, and your next you may direct to me at Astoria. The school, however, is to be kept up, and you will direct to my wife as usual, Lenox, Mass.

To me.

March 8, 1844.

I wish Lizzy would go somewhere as soon as she is strong enough. Ask her if I shall send her some money? I have plenty, and if it ever happens that she has to spare and I want, I will apply to her right away. Tell her I have been recruiting my spirits for a month, and they would be perfect if I could only know that she was in a state of grace, that she would repent and reform.

I have omitted a whole page, of the most tender consideration for the same person, lest some one should misunderstand the mingling of pleasantries with serious anxieties, which relieved my brother's sympathy to himself, and made it such a balm to others.

Eliza P. has just sent me a beautiful note from T. It has done me good, but I suppose I must not mention the contents, or there will be a blow up in Irving Place.

Your mention of W. R., too, pleases me greatly. I have got fond of W., and if we could see the souls of some people with the quick discernment of the deaf and dumb, who learn to talk and to read accurately and with *right emphasis*, what streaks of light from above would enter our minds, and what exquisite enjoyment of confidence, companionship and sympathy there would be from the society of those very people, whom we now pass by as machines, or refrain from touching as we would an iceberg, or keep clear of as of a steam engine for fear the boiler will burst.

P. S. What the devil does J. O'S. mean by talking as he does about Texas? I have always considered him as a sort of angel from Heaven, but if the angels have not more judgment than he has in this matter, however much they may desire to



look into our affairs, I shall keep clear of them, if possible. I like your loving mention of Grace, but not your figure; the pillar of a house should not be on the roof; she is always on my lap.

*Lenox, March 10, 1844.*

MY DEAR BESSY :

I perceive by your letter to your mother received last night, that both your ear and eye are filled with the beautiful in Boston, so that I suppose you do not miss either sights or sounds from any other quarter. Nevertheless, I do not wish the chain of association to be broken, and so I must tell you that the azalea (is that the way to spell it) is in full flower and very pretty, and if it were not for the hairy leaves of the plant from which you cannot snap the dust, it would be altogether beautiful. It now resembles some prettily-formed girl, with ugly features and a sweet delicious voice, who reminds you of the absolute duty and luxury sometimes of seeing and not perceiving. Why should not the eye be trained to take in what pleases it, and shut out the rest? I am sure it has the power, or there would not be so many parents who have a special liking for the look of their children. The little tea rose is as fresh and bright in the sun to-day, as if the light were shining for its exclusive benefit, and the jessamine is putting forth its young leaves as joyously as if it had no sorrowing memory of those that were so murdered by the frost. . . . .

Smith left us yesterday. I had great pleasure from his visit. I take the greater interest in him because some of his good qualities, the best of them, lie deep, and are not likely to be seen by those who do not know him well. . . . I send my love to all the family Minot. If you mean to take up your final abode with them, break it to them by degrees, or let them

find it out by the future. Everybody is prepared for the future. . . . I suppose your mother has written you about the school and the children. Of the first I must remark for the credit of your mother, that there is a spirit of honor and fairness in it that I believe to be very unusual in such places, and which I have observed of late in some striking instances, as your mother has been for two days unwell and out of school.

Gracie's eyes are still troublesome. This would have troubled me more once than it does now, but I have seen so much good come from the things that we most anxiously try to avoid, that I am awaiting the result with patience, hoping that whatever is will be the best.

I believe I have not thanked you for your last letter, which I do now very sincerely. Keep watch of yourself, my darling child, and let no evil inclination settle into a habit. Love much, and all good angels will guard you.

Believe me ever yours,

CHAS. SEDGWICK.

This letter to me is written after a visit to Stockbridge, and after details of the well- or ill-being of all our dear people there, my brother says:

March 25, 1844.

I went to see Mrs. Hopkins (our good friend with more than seventy years upon her head). She is the most animated person in Stockbridge. There is nothing new at S., except that *General Sutherland* is the editor of the *Visitor*. Who he is I know not, some loafer I presume—a Canadian refugee. I requested him to publish Smith's article, from the *Evening Post*. He said he could not publish any article so long as that, *entire*,

but he would read it, and publish extracts from it, if he did not find them exceptionable. I put the paper in my pocket and bowed to him. It is an admirable article, worth everybody's reading, and I wish you would give it to Mr. Dewey. Was not Mr. Bryant's short editorial, in the same paper, admirable? How cool, and yet how strong and decisive upon the point of an immediate decision of the question. Ward says, that the feeling about Texas is so strong in Boston, that if a Northern man were to vote for it and come there, he would be tarred and feathered.

On this subject and other kindred ones that related to the moral prosperity of the nation, my brother felt as fervidly as other men feel about their children's affairs, and so, thank God, did all my brothers.

On my return, I found Mr. Samuel Ward of Boston at my house, who is come to look after a settlement and a country life for himself, his wife, and two babies. He prefers Lenox to Stockbridge.

This was the beginning of an acquaintance that ripened into a most pleasant intercourse, and a warm and satisfactory friendship.

I hear that Mr. Minot has gone to Newport. I presume he has gone to get rid of the press of the Sedgwick population. What a pity it is, that a man's house is no longer his castle. Pray cause some one to write and tell us of the invalids, and don't you get sick, my darling. I am delighted to see Mr. Field's article on Texas, in the last *Post*.

To his daughter.

*Lenox, March 28, 1844.*

MY DEAR BESSIE:

Your mother says I have not written to you since I received your letter by Mr. Galpin; without intending in any way to impeach her veracity, I say I have, but as it would be doing great violence to her feelings to have any mail go without one letter or any messenger without two, I have determined to send a dispatch by Mr. Ward. There is a chance that he may be our neighbor as he wishes to *settle* in the country, and prefers Lenox to the low grounds of the Hoosac or Housatonic, and pronounces Mrs. Colton's house quite comfortable and Mr. Twining's altogether agreeable, saving and excepting some intolerable nuisances which he thinks may be removed. He is the most accommodating Bostonian brought up in front of the Common that I have seen, and considering the aspect of the country at this season, the skies black, the meadows brown, the trees leafless, the roads muddy, the house shabby, the out buildings and back-yards intolerable even to a native, he has an inconceivably small shrug as he looks at the premises, so slight that it seems to me to indicate something more than good-breeding or good sense.

I have been all over the village with him and out of the village, on foot and in a lumber wagon, and he has, moreover, surveyed the country on foot, most enterprisingly, for some miles round, and he pronounces everything *very good*; the country far more beautiful than he imagined or recollected. I have found it rather necessary to disparage Lenox, and I have dwelt full as largely on the beauty and eligibility of Stockbridge, as that poverty-stricken and deserted place will warrant; but he will not hear to me, either in my heartfelt warn-

ings to him not to fix his affections on this vulgar shire town, nor my entreaties that he will look upon the little basin of the Housatonic as the happy valley—a gem among the mountains. I cannot help thinking that he has some sinister purpose in his dogged determination to settle in Lenox, or that he has had some singularly ill-luck in the city of Boston. And now I wish you, in a most particularly private manner, to inquire of William, his classmate, if he is not a little shattered; if he has not been bewildered by the fine arts, by reading poetry, if it is not likely he has been so absorbed in the *Inferno* that he thinks that there is no way of keeping out of hell, but by getting to the top of Lenox Hill. I have seen nothing out of the way in him, in his appearance, demeanor, language or conversation; but I confess I am staggered by the great fact that he has come here at this season of his own head alone, and after wading in the mud three days, declares himself perfectly satisfied, and determined to come back again. This is an idiosyncrasy certainly in a Bostonian, that requires attention.

Well, Belle, they say you have had a good time, and I am glad of it. I suppose you are now about going to Milton, where I should be glad enough to spend a day with you. There is a good deal of wisdom in that house<sup>1</sup> without any formality, and a good deal of fun without any folly, a hearty hospitality that costs nothing but a decent sense of the spirit of it, and a freedom that is absolutely perfect to every person that gets inside, and is tolerably well behaved. You will not get my letter till you come back, but if you have an opportunity, I wish you to send my love to Mr. and Mrs. Forbes.

I had a letter night before last from your aunt Jane, and one yesterday from your aunt C., not twelve days old, like the last two. The obstruction of navigation has a wonderful effect upon

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Forbes's.

the mails, especially when there is floating ice, the mail bag hits every cake, and is sure to be sent back by it till next morning.

I have seen your uncle Doctor several times lately, and he looks quite well; he has gone back to his old regimen of cake and apple pie, eats and sleeps well, never better; has a perfect digestion, and when he keeps tolerably quiet, and does not walk farther than Ashburner's, feels well. Mr. ——— is under the weather, weak and nervous; how nervous, is best explained by an expression of his son, which, being rather inelegant, I should not repeat if it were not so happily laconic as to show both his father's state of mind and his, in one word. The boy invited his young friends to see him. They played in the yard, but were so rampagious that his father flew to the door, and in one of his least gentle tones ordered them off the premises. ———, distressed, ashamed and confounded, flew to his mother and told her that his father had done a shameful thing. "Why," said he, "it brings all my guts into my mouth!" Pray excuse me. I mention it to show the simplicity and meaning of the Anglo-Saxon tongue, the piety of the boy too, for all his bowels moved within him.

We had a letter from Willie yesterday, in which he details at some length, and in a most affecting way, some of the afflictions that befall him on account of his youth. Among other things, he says he is not old enough to take charge of Miss Minot's ticket to the concert; and when he is with you, he says, such is your style of conversation towards him that one would think him a mere boy, and you at least forty! Now, Bessy, when you are with Will don't let drop an expression that can imply that he is under sixteen, nor that you are over twenty-five. He will inevitably lose all respect for your judgment. Good bye, my darling, when are you coming home?

Your affectionate

FATHER.

To me.

*April 4, 1844-*

DEAR KATE:

. . . . . I wish you would ask Theodore what sort of a person is his man, George Nelson. I found him to-day in the prison for stealing cloth at Barrington — very much dissatisfied with his situation, and very desirous to get out again. He pretended to tell me the whole story of his misfortune, for there are no longer any crimes in this highly civilized society, and although it was not creditable to his character for integrity, inasmuch as he violated a trust just as soon as it was reposed in him, yet it was pitiable, because he declared he was accidentally tempted to drink the first time for six years, and having drunk, was so dizzy and bewildered that he could think of nothing but his desire to go back to Ireland, and he had no means to get there but to steal a piece of a large surplus stock of cloth which he was set to guard. The next day he perceived he had committed an error, but did not know how to extricate himself. I told George that my befriending him would depend entirely on his telling me the whole truth; he declared he had done so; but I found in fifteen minutes that he had omitted some material circumstances, such as his having taken several pieces of cloth instead of one.

I am told to quit writing, and so I will, for your sake, without saying a word of Texas or Mr. C. S., any farther than that I wish he might know what is said, and what I think it is quite possible may be true, that the ablest advocates of annexation are persons interested in the sale of Texas lands.

Good night. Give my love to Lizzie and my sisters, and sisters' children.

Your affectionate

C. S.

To me.

April, 1844.

To-morrow the school breaks up, and we lose Eliza Swain. This is very painful to me. She has shown a great deal of character within these two years, and she is so fond of us, and we are so fond of her, that it is really a great loss to us to part with her; and as to Anne Sever, she is a remarkable girl, a girl of uncommon intellect and sweetness of disposition, so uncommon that I never expect to see the like of her in school again. She has been constantly a member of the family, as well as the school; our intercourse with her has been constant, we have enjoyed our books and everything together, and she has so much increased our best pleasures, and all our pleasures in every way, that it is melancholy to have her, as well as Eliza, leave the house. For your sake I am sorry as well as my own, for her affection for you is very strong.

I hear that there is some prospect that Susy will be with you, for which I shall be *very* glad. I wish you would take a run up here for a few days; it is an easier thing than you think for, and then Jenny and I will be your devoted servants, and you can plant, and Apollos can water, and God will doubtless give the increase, and fill you with pleasing visions of the coming, blooming summer.

The trees are coming forward rapidly, and a week here with your quick wits and hands, and a plenty of servants at your command would change the face of things. *Do come*, and bring with you my *slipper*, and a *color* for the outside of the house and wing, which must be painted.

Whenever you come, I pray you to bear in mind that the Lenox branch of the house must be *rich*. The feeling of poverty where one has enough, can only come from three things,



bodily weakness, in which case it is excusable, mental weakness, which has no sympathy, or avarice, which is a crime. So that if you do not bring the certificate of a physician that you are in feeble health, and have just money enough for meat, washing and lodging, I shall expect you to enjoy the blessing of abundance. As to your servants, you can bring as many as you please, and whom you please, and I will endeavor to treat him, her or them with all the consideration they deserve.

To me.

*April 10, 1844.*

MY DEAR MISS CATHERINE :

I was quite glad to find by your letter to E., that you flared up at a letter of mine. You never do that when your spirits are low ; besides, I don't mind a little blow-up with you now and then. You are rather weak in the matter of resentment and can't hold mad but a short time ; so the next time you write, if you don't get over it I shall apologize, and we will be friends again. Just at the present time I am indifferent to all human friendships or enmities, for I went in the morning to hear Hotchkin's school examined in Greek, which I never knew ; this afternoon in Latin, which I have forgot, and this evening in composition, which has made me slightly stomach sick, so that I feel very weak in body and mind.

To me.

*Lenox, April 21, 1844.*

MY DEAR SISTER :

Elizabeth has heard of the death (by cholera) of her brother Ogden, at Madeira. This will be a sad blow to his poor mother, and what will become of his wife and children I know not. It is a shame, I think, to the American Board, that they make no provision in such cases for the destitute sur-

vivors. I suppose they think it would lessen the spiritual character of their laborers to feel that they or theirs had any interest, except in Heaven. They seem entirely to forget that they must pass through this world to get there, and that if they, to whose household they belong, fail to provide for them, they make themselves heathen by the very word they are so zealous to communicate. This is one of the strange inconsistencies into which men are led when they are totally absorbed in one great project, however benevolent it may be, and furnishes, as many other instances of human conduct do furnish, abundant reason to think that the arrangements of Providence are much better than human wisdom can make them.

To me.

*Monday, May 5, 1844.*

MY DEAR KATE:

. . . . . By the by, brother Douglas, a colored man and a slave, escaped five years ago, has no learning but what he stole, but he is without doubt one of the most eloquent men I ever heard speak, and has fewer commonplaces than any of the white abolition orators I have heard, save Doctor Follen. He has gone to New York, will be there this week, and my advice to Theodore was, and to you is, *to go and hear him.*

Wilson was in a great quandary what to do with so respectable a colored gentleman and his associates, one of whom is a *full out* and a devilish bigot, but the other, brother Gay, a nice, amiable, gentlemanly little fellow, and he came to me to know if it would do to put them down at his table. I declined the responsibility of advising in so delicate a matter involving such awful consequences, but told him I should be

happy to dine with brother Douglas, and that I would get brother Bangs and brother Bishop to do the same, which we did. It proved too strong a dose for Wilson's nerves, and he requested him afterwards to take a separate table. Wilson's feelings became strong and extended round the neighborhood, for neighborhoods have much to do with the way a man chooses to conduct his business, but as the element of fear seemed to enter largely into it, an apprehension that Jake Grant and Jim Michael and Pete Prince would forthwith insist on their social rights, I ceased to sympathize with it, and recollecting Mumbet and brother Harry, I forthwith asked Bess, if she had any objection to giving brother Douglas a breakfast; "not the least." So feeling that his color was a misfortune and not a crime, I made all the amends I could to him.

I would like to give you some account of his two speeches, but I have not time. He has a pretty good countenance and a very expressive one, and good form and features, a sweet, flexible, and deep-toned voice, a strong memory, and great powers of imitation, great self-possession and feeling, and modesty enough to give it power, without giving offence. In short he is an able man, and reasons well.

To me.

*May 1844.*

. . . . . Could not you, Miss Kate, seeing its you, just ask John to bring from market a smoked salmon, and when I ask what it cost, say, "now really I don't remember"? That would be nice. I won't get Washburn to varnish your table. Babcock has been here varnishing ever since the North River broke up, and has varnished everything but your table and the kitchen tongs. If Washburn comes now, I shall get into a greater muss than the native Americans. —

wants "a well recommended cook," Irish. Apropos—Suppose you should interrogate "an Irish cook well recommended" as to some one of the fourteen modes of cooking veal; for instance, as to the breast when it is brought on as nicely dressed as a baby for a christening, perfumed with thyme and sweet marjoram and summer savory, and so savory that it fills one with remorse to think he has ever profaned the name of veal. What kind of waiting will the little French girl do? I think I should like to have her sleep on the cot in my room and teach me French, when I happen to be awake in the night, and then she could read a little to my wife when she is dressing, and she would not lose that time! . . . Good Heavens! who can help believing in the inalienable right to *pursue* happiness and *not to get it*, who thinks of — and — picking each other out from all the rest of mankind for *bosom* companions, exclusive and inseparable? Who can help believing in the providence of God, when he sees people bound together by their children in a hateful marriage; and who can help believing there is a heaven beyond, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, where kindred spirits shall meet, and worship, and love together.

I think I shall go to see my cousin Ben on Monday, and return on Wednesday, so if you get home *Wednesday* morning don't be cross. I shall go and see the doctor to-morrow; he is not well. Mr. A. is poorly, G. half blind and dyspeptic, and I want you and Elizabeth, Robert and me to be first-rate—occasionally cast down for appearance' sake, but in no wise perplexed or distressed.

My brother writing of the religious fanaticisms of a neighboring village, says:

To Mrs. Jane Sedgwick.

The church in P. remains entire. The ministers of various denominations have made a solemn league and covenant against all profligate customs therein, and there is reason to hope that the greatest of all—dancing—is effectually put down. This is owing, I think, mainly to the ascendancy that two individuals have got from mere force of character, Dr. T. the head of the church, and G. the principal member. T. is a genius as well as a divine. He is upsetting, one by one, the false maxims and adages that the world has received as true, and thereby been hindered in making spiritual progress. His last discovery and announcement is perhaps his best, that there is no maxim so *false* as that “an honest man’s the noblest work of God.” You should have heard described, as I did, a scene at the sacrament, when he closed an affecting, and no doubt a most effective address, by declaring that a man could not have a more ignominious epitaph, than “here lies an honest man”; no doubt bringing home the doctrine of salvation by grace to the bosoms and business of all his flock. And is there not reason to hope that he will have many souls given to him as *seals of his ministry!*

We are all as well as usual; not so much afraid of war in consequence of Polk’s message as if old Jackson had sent it, and missing Bessy just as much as if there were no newspapers.

I have written to Hal to day, to republish his father’s pamphlet upon English practice. I am very earnest about this. I am very much at leisure now and shall be glad to ride down and put in your peas and spinach.

So with every shower and every sunshine came these little manifestations of my brother's loving providence.

To Mrs. Jane Sedgwick.

1844.

Your letter was particularly kind, and moreover very pleasing to me, because I have had an impression that Mrs. Childe<sup>1</sup> was worthy of more sympathy and respect than she has received from our people; that she was worthy of far more attention from the *worthies* of New York than she has ever received, and having this impression, I was very anxious that my own people should be among the first to reverse this state of things. As to Mrs. Childe's wisdom in the great scheme of benevolence to which she has mainly devoted her life, I do not pretend to judge. If merit is to be determined by such a test, there are few, I fear, of the benevolent spirits of the age, whose labors are directed beyond their own small sphere of observation, who would stand the test; but if sympathy, wherever it may be found, disinterested devotion to the happiness of others, an energy which is never relaxed or repressed by false shame, or the want of encouragement, great purity and elevation of mind, entitle a person to be ranked among the choice spirits of the world, and aided as such, my belief is that Mrs. Childe is among the number.

In the same letter he says of the author of the "*Mysteries of Paris*."

If there is any truth in his letter, at the conclusion, to the editor of the *Journal des Debats*, there is unequivocal proof of his having rendered substantial and lasting service to the unfortunate classes. I wish somebody would tell me why it

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. L. M. Childe, the well-known author and abolitionist.

is, that with an omnipotent Creator and Maker and overruling Providence, the great masses of mankind in all countries, from the beginning of the world, have been led, induced, persuaded or *permitted* to toil and to sweat, to convert God's bounties into golden harvests, gather them into garners, deliver over the keys to some misbegotten rascal in purple and fine linen, and then take enough for themselves to keep soul and body together, or starve at the palace of his Royal Highness. This is a great puzzle to me, and there is only one way in which I can solve the mystery and preserve my Christian faith; that is, by thinking that selfishness is the one governing principle, and if the people did not go hungry, the lords would starve. Will it be always so? Tell me, young Jeanie, you of the new social school.

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, Nov. 11, 1844.*

I am sorry that William should think it necessary to threaten me with the loss of his society and yours in a certain event, though I suppose he was not quite serious in this, but has chosen that particular expression to show his horror of Polk's election. I do not know now but I shall be obliged to make an affidavit respecting my vote, before I can be admitted again to full fellowship in Beacon street, but for the present, at least, I shall leave my *best and dearest* friends to confide in my principles or distrust them, as to them seems meet. For the present, I think it sufficient that I have at all times, everywhere, loudly, openly and constantly protested against the audacious and atrocious attempts to perpetuate slavery in the name of democracy! Bad as all this seems, I have not the gloomy forebodings that have so often distressed me before. About twenty times since I grew up, the whole civilized world, and

especially this country and England, has been on the brink of a fatal revolution. The brinky feeling of sudden destruction has occurred nowhere so often, and to so many persons as here and in England. Here and in England during all that time, there has been a wonderful increase of knowledge, wealth, refinement, comfort, and personal security. People talk loud and big and hard, but they seldom lay violent hands on anybody. It is all quiet after election. Butter and honey, the two great elements of wisdom, are plenty; woollen broadcloth stout and thick for sixty-seven cents a yard, in spite of the tariff, and good thick cotton for six cents a yard, and I recommend to you, dear Kate, to paste up in your nursery a distich, from the philosophy of which I have derived strong consolation, and which I think ought to be taught to the very young very early, and especially adopted in the creed of their elders, *i.e.* :

Human beings are such fools  
In spite of colleges and schools,  
That when they've nothing to perplex them,  
They'll surely find enough to vex them.

To this day an approaching election affects my nerves, somewhat as an approaching thunder storm does Fanny Butler's; and it is not till it is fairly over, that I fully realize that nobody has been struck with lightning or was likely to be, and I am very desirous that those I have begotten should have more faith, more hope, more confidence in God. God causes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of it (*i.e.*, the excess) He will restrain.

To me.

*February 10, 1845.*

MY DEAR KATE :

. . . . . There is an immense value in a good joke; for instance, last night came your account of the



sad accident<sup>1</sup> and forebodings about Sara. Eliza P. was flat on her back from exhaustion, Mr. P., somewhat weary with filial and pastoral duties, looked grave and solemn; sister Susan was in the depths of brooding stillness, and all the rest seemed to be in the deep shadows of over-hanging clouds, when Sue touched off Lizzie's twenty-four pounder against the Irish nation, which caused a general shout that cleared up the whole atmosphere, and as there is a time to laugh as well as to cry, I insisted upon having the remainder of the evening devoted to the fulfilment of that prophecy. I wish you would tell Lizzie that my fire was made this morning by my adopted sister, Nancy (an Irish servant), who spread out the stockings and clothes of E. and myself before the fire, which moved me so much that I think I should have left my rib and jumped instantly out of bed and kissed her, if it had not been that the lines written on her countenance clearly forbade such an expression of gratitude! I have been reading for several evenings, Parker's book on religion which Ward sent me, but about which I shall say nothing till I get through with it. He is a bold fellow and upright; whether wise or not, remains to be seen.

I told you in my last that the dinner at Ticknor's, which I dreaded so much, was one of the pleasantest I was ever at, where the guests were all strangers. The one the next day, at Quincy's, was also pleasant. I had a good deal of conversation with Crawford, who was very agreeable, and also with young Webster<sup>2</sup>. He had a good deal to say about the Chinese that was entertaining. He says they are very fond of children, pay

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Canda, a lovely girl of seventeen, an only child, on returning from her birth-night party, was thrown from the carriage and killed instantly.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. W. was an attaché to a government mission to China.

absolute reverence to old people, are honest in general, and when dishonest, so funny that you forgive the crime. He told a story about two fellows, who marched into a man's bedroom with candles in hand, and stole his watch and clothes. They had no weapons, but were stark naked and greased all over, so that they could easily slip through the hands of an adversary; and they had stuck little knife-blades and pieces of glass in their hair, so that when seized there, they had only to laugh at the man who seized them by the hair of the head, and let go when his hands began to stream with blood. They went off laughing with the spoil, and when dressed could not be identified.

To his daughter Bessie.

*Lenox, April, 1845.*

DEAR BELLE :

. . . . . To-night there is to be a great ball, to-morrow a lecture and exhibition of Morse's Telegraph, and the next day depart your mother and Willie, and all the rest, and exactly how I shall feel I don't know; but of one thing I am confident, I shall be more grateful than ever for the near neighborhood of Sam Ward, a person whom I have known more than a year, and liked better and better, and who has not disappointed me in anything; a person whom I respect much, as well as love. Did you ever think how seldom very sincere affection is united with *entire* respect? . . . . .

I want to tell you some news and there is none to tell. There is a regular town quarrel going on in Pittsfield for the promotion of good morals between the lovers and haters of dancing. The majority, I understand, has elected a dancing Select man! over an old Puritan opposer who has been one of the fathers of the town ever since it was Pontoosuc. Now I presume the clergy

will give up, for they do not commonly preach against the sentiments of the majority. So much for domestic broils. . .

To me.

1845.

I am quite sorry to have Bangs (a Methodist minister) go. I wish now to stick to the Methodist church, and I know not who may come there. In this, as in other things, if you cannot have circumstances to your mind, you must try to bring your mind to your circumstances.

Dear Kate, the mercury has risen to 46° and mine with it. Two hats both beautiful and *unordered* were sent me on Wednesday. One by a hatter with a bill, and one by a friend *without* a bill; *that* I keep.

Oh! I forgot to tell you that I am well, and that for your sake and Bessie's I shall cultivate longevity by every art.

Charles thus writes to me on the death of a friend whose life had not been blameless.

The poor fellow will be judged in mercy and freed from sin and temptation. I had no idea that his death could have affected me so much as it has done. It is, perhaps, because I realize more than I could in his lifetime how utterly wretched and miserable a thing it is to be cast off and forsaken by our nearest friends in this life. But thanks to the Author of all goodness, neither resentment nor unkindness survive the grave. When death comes, it is our own deficiencies and faults we think of, not those of the persons who have vexed or grieved us. We would, if we could, recall and forgive them, and blot from our memory everything but the love we once bore them. Distressing as this is, there is consolation and comfort in it, for it reveals the quality of mercy to us as we never appre-

hended it before. It teaches us a lesson of humility that we could not otherwise learn, and it touches our hearts with a tender charity and compassion for those with whom we vainly compare ourselves, and above all, it gives us a new hope in God.

To William Minot, Jr.

*Lenox, Feb. 12, 1845.*

. . . . . From what I have read of the Texas speeches I have no doubt it is to come in, and that the main reason for it is the cupidity of the Northern people. The South is banded together from fear, the North is divided; some desire it here for profit, some for power, and there is nothing to resist it but those who fear God, and, *if convenient*, keep his commandments. After all it is the disgrace, the moral stain of the thing, that I dread more than the consequences. There cannot be in our large domain a permanent preponderating slave influence; when the South have got all that they ask or can get, their bribes will diminish, their threats will be unavailing, they will have the weight of their torpid population hanging about their necks like a millstone; the abolitionists will die out, the hatred of slavery and of the slave power will gather strength; the free people with their free schools, *free postage* and locomotives, will go ahead like a rocket, and "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind" will sooner or later sever the democracy from those despotic leaders who have assumed their name and perverted their power. If the Lord reigns, the Custom House Democracy must be put down.

To me.

*Feb. 17, 1845.*

. . . . . Your caution about Mr. Parker's book came too late, my dear, and, poisonous or nutritious, it has

done its work. The book was sent to me by Ward, and for that reason I read it. I had read, I think, nearly the half of it before I could read it with patience and without prejudice.

It was exceedingly disagreeable to me, and gave me something of the feeling of restlessness and indignation I should have had if a person had undertaken to discuss before me the demerits and defects of my father or mother. I had so insensibly associated in my own mind the beauty and loveliness of Christ's character with the authority of the inspiration of the New Testament, that it did not seem to me possible that my faith should be weakened in the divine authority of the book, without depriving my soul of the needed consolations of his divine character.

I have not time nor space to tell you what I think of Mr. Parker's book. There is much of it I do not like, but I will relieve you so far as to tell you the effect, in some particulars, it has had upon my own mind. First, as to the inspiration of the books of the Old Testament, I never had anything but a misty faith in that. The parts of it that affected my mind before reading this book would, I doubt not, affect it in a similar manner now; and let people say what they will about it, I fancy all the parts from which they can get comfort or instruction, are those which strengthen their conceptions of God's character as the universal Father, the everlasting Sustainer of those who believe in his justice.

Second, as to the New Testament, though in some particulars I may think differently of it from what I did before, I do not believe so much in its literal authority (I never did believe, nor did you, in its plenary inspiration), yet I must say it is a book of as solemn import to me as ever, and has all the sanctions that an absolutely divine life and absolutely divine teach-

ings can give to any human conscience. On the whole, I do not think the book has done me any harm, nor will do any in my family; but it is a terrible test of theological systems, and in its doctrines of the absolute religion, and in its appeals to the conscience, and spiritual nature, and religious responsibility of men, I have hardly ever read anything more serious, more stirring, and more deeply touching, than some parts of it are. Many of the inspired sayings of the prophets and apostles are treated with levity, no doubt. The partial notions of God which Jews and Christians have alike entertained are scouted throughout, probably no more so than they deserve; but faith, truth, courage and obedience, everything of goodness, disinterestedness and love, that goes to make up inspiration, either in prophets or apostles, is treated with infinite respect.

I believe Mr. Parker considers everything inspiration which touches the heart and moves the soul to goodness, whether in the Bible or out of it, and that the Bible furnishes no evidence of its own inspiration any farther than it reveals God as a being of infinite perfection, and Christ as the teacher of immortality by a divine life. I hope to re-read this book with you next summer, and get the good parts of it and reject the bad, as we must of all books.

To his daughter Bessie.

*Lenox, April 27, 1845.*

DEAREST BESSIE :

. . . . . ——— came here two days ago with a letter from Mr. Ware. For Mr. Ware's sake, I gave a cup of cold water to the least of his brethren. ——— tried Illinois, lost his land because he could not pay for it, got fever and ague which he could have for nothing, and came back to

Boston to enjoy good society. He has used up Mr. Ware, Fuller, Peabody, Hawthorne, Ripley, & Co., and has now come to Berkshire, where he expects a jubilee to be got up for him every day in some private family. He has brought nothing with him that I have seen, except Sherman's *poems*, which I suppose he brought by mistake instead of his lozenges, expecting to affect the bowels through the imagination. Perhaps this idea was put into his head at the community where baked beans are considered a specific for disordered social affections. He is what Ward calls a specimen of a "mild enthusiast," and when he finds language inadequate to describe the beauty of scenery, he works his jaws and eyebrows in a most peculiar manner to give force to his expression. He has come to these parts for pure air, fine scenery, and fine society. He looked to me *too* literary, and I sent him forthwith to the Ingalls Harem. The Sultanas veiled their faces, and he was compelled to retreat. His wants were pressing, my circumstances were growing perilous, and with unwonted energy I despatched him to — —, where all his objects could be accomplished. He came back to me in the evening in a state of pleasing excitement, having made arrangements for the summer, and finding the place and the people, the house and grounds, the sunlight, moonlight, twilight and total darkness there, all that his warm heart and excited fancy could wish. There he is to go, and there, thank heaven, he is to be, four good miles off.

Bess, we must be wide awake or this railroad will be the ruin of us. All the men and women of the *nineteenth century* born out of due time, will come to Berkshire by way of Illinois, and squat, and the owners of the soil won't have as much as a pre-emption right in it. We must explode, expose, forswear good society as a humbug, study Hebrew, and in the

meantime swear by the book of Genesis, that it is mis-translated, and that the only real blessing ever conferred on man was the privilege to labor till he sweat, and to keep sweating by labor till he fell asleep, so that neither Fuller, Fourier, Ellery Channing, nor any other idler could write about social organizations and the social affections, till they stifled every feeling of humanity. . . . Good-night, my darlint, good-night, good-night. I kiss you, and shall get the varioloid I suppose, for just now I take diseases easily. When —— raps, I feel a cold chill, and by the time he gets in, I am in a great heat; but magnetism cures everything, and when he makes passes towards Stockbridge, I doubt not it will work off. I trust lying and hypocrisy are not the sins they are cracked up to be, and I presume not, for they seem to me to constitute the very aliment of good society for all strangers and interlopers. I gave —— a dinner and a tea, a note to *Sury*, and another to ——, and his gratitude is unbounded, and all the time I was so active in his service, it was the very essence and concentration of self-seeking, and I wished he had been one of the thirteen on board the *Swallow*.<sup>1</sup> . . . . Good-night.

C. S.

*Monday night.*

I am rejoicing in this day for your mother. She has as little need of the light of the sun or the moon as anybody I know of, but such a sunlight *is* pleasing.

To me.

*May 15, 1845.*

O Kate, how I did wish you were here at breakfast this morning. The shears were ground and sharp. The robins were singing their love songs all over the garden, the bobo'-links,

<sup>1</sup> A steamer recently burned.



the vain things, opened their throats and out poured note after note, deep, full and sweet, and the little birds were flying first after one, then the other, with their merry tones of glee and flattery, like so many excited followers of Vieux-temps and Ole Bull. The air was soft and delicious, filled with the fragrance of new blossoms, and the fresh, teeming earth, which had been parched and longing for showers, seemed full of odors sending up incense to heaven for showers of heaven's grace which were most bountifully poured upon her bosom last night. I don't know that ever in my life I enjoyed a rain more than the one that has just fallen. Last evening at eight o'clock, Bessy and I were watering your plants—she protesting it was unnecessary, and I thinking that the clouds, which were flying rapidly, had nothing but wind in them. At ten minutes past eight it began to pour, and rained steadily till ten, and by turns all night. The mercury did not go below 59° or 60°, and now the apples are all in blossom. The maples are thick with leaves, and the change from yesterday is inexpressibly beautiful.

I have at last got to be quite anxious about George. I hope he will get the appointment. If he does, we shall not know what worthy man has lost it, nor how many dear friends' longings have been disappointed. If he does not, we may fairly suppose it will fall to one whose wants are as great and as keenly felt, and whose friends are full as loving and well pleased.

The Chief Justice is here, and I had a pleasant drive with him this morning. We are now on the trial of the first cause, and this is the third day. A dispute between two brothers about their inheritance, which will end, as such disputes in general do, by transferring the whole property to strangers, and keeping only eternal hatred, a species of property that has but one merit, i.e., it is exclusive, is accumulated at will, and is in-

*alienable*. I don't believe there are any other long causes, and I rather think the court will adjourn on Saturday. "Mr. Sedgwick, as soon as you can, please make that certificate for Mrs. Fuller." "Yes, sir." Good-bye.

C. S.

To me.

May, 1845.

DEAR KATE:

Mr. Sabin has just called to me in the garden that he is going to New York right away. My hands are covered with dirt an inch thick, but my heart is right clean towards you, and with that I indite this matter.

I have uncovered, covered up, and uncovered again your plants in the garden, and carried out and brought in the plants from the house for your sake, as the inviting sun and rain, or threatening cold and wind warned me to do. Sunday it was rainy and warm; yesterday warm; they were all out. I went to Stockbridge, returned late, and was scared to death. I thought every mother's son and daughter of them was killed; for the wind blew, and it was cold as Greenland. I brought in the plants, covered those in the garden, and went to bed sorrowful, and was *heavy*, for I thought you would feel the neglect, and never know how sorry I was.

This morning they look bright again, to my great joy, are natural and out, but I am constantly afraid I shall forget them. I will try not, but don't blame me if a frost come like a thief in the night.

Jemmy is making your bed to-day; the ground turns up beautiful, and I would give the forefinger of my left hand, to have you here, if it could be cut off without hurting.

I had a most charming letter from E., on Saturday night,

from Pittsburgh. She had a prosperous time, and enjoyed everything she saw to the utmost; stood on the platform next to the engine going over the Alleghanies, went without dinner, got soaked, and remained happy till she fell asleep from fatigue. Ain't that nice, and fresh, and fine for forty-three? I am glad you have written to her—very glad.

Love to all. Good-bye my darling,

Your affectionate, C. S.

To Miss Maria Sedgwick.

1845.

DEAR RIE:

I hope your mother will survive me. It is necessary she should, to have her feelings softened and do me justice.

In spite of all the calamities that my dog has brought upon her, she would, I am sure, write me a sweet epitaph.

Now I cannot tell how soon I can be restored, or whether ever, to her good graces. I know not how many sweet lilies she may have lost, nor how much of all her labors has been uprooted by my dog. But this I know, that last night when I drove up to your gate, I was afraid to go in. She invited me in, and there was that kindness, and courtesy, and dignity in her manner, that any stranger who had happened to observe her, would have sworn in court, was the very essence of a refined hospitality; but Rie, all the love was wiped out of her face, as clean as you could wipe out figures from a slate with a sponge, and she looked right t'other way. She was thinking of what she had lost, and my very image was so associated with her sufferings that she could not even smile. She could not stand still, but like a person in deep affliction

walked backwards and forwards. I pitied her, but what could I do but take my dog and come right off?

But Rie, she is very much broken; only think what she has endured from that dog, and submitted to it, when starvation, whipping or a knife would have relieved her at once. What would have become of her children if she had treated them in the same weak way she has treated Frolic? Why, the same pertinacious mischief in a child would have justified infanticide. I took my dog, and he left the village with me. For the first time in his life he deserted me on the road. I should have gone straight back for him, but it was in a rain which wet me to the skin, and I was afraid of adding to your mother's grief by a rheumatism. I send a messenger specially for the dog; if he goes to Stockbridge again, I will, if necessary to prevent the recurrence of such a calamity in future, put a knife to his heart with my own hand. I see I must lose my sister by his acts, or him by my own. I have a dread of murder, but I will commit murder.

Your loving uncle,

CHARLES.

To his daughter.

*Thursday morning, Lenox, June 19, 1845.*

DEAR KATE:

I received your letter on school house steps, Lenox and Stockbridge present, at five o'clock in the afternoon; seized on the passage respecting your aunt's visit, and from that moment till now, just taking out a *few minutes to eat and sleep*, I have urged upon her to decide whether she would go to Boston, and if so, when? She *can't*. She longs to go; feels in a quandary about many things. The Ninth street children are here; Jessie<sup>1</sup> has been confined; Lizzie wants seeing to; the

<sup>1</sup> Miss Sedgwick's pet dog.

family Minot is breaking up and wants to take a long breath, and finally my conclusion is that, as there is only as much time as it took Mrs. Hamlet to kill her husband, before you come up, viz., one short month, she won't go; but probably she will so far recover her faculties as to write you this day, and leave it—in doubt. Your affectionate C. S., in haste and no mistake.

To the same.

*Lenox, Oct. 22, 1845.*

. . . . . And now my darling, a word to you. I cannot tell you how often at home and abroad during Fanny's<sup>1</sup> visit, I have desired your presence. My heart is *seldom*, if ever, moved by any deep or true feeling of love, joy or sorrow, that it does not embrace you, and whenever it is stirred by any pure affections, your image is almost sure to remind me how blessed they are. Fanny's presence does so improve the quality of life, and increase its power by her infinite variety of thought, feeling and expression, and she does so strangely link one to her in affection, almost as much by her mirth and joy, as by the deep sadness of her condition and her occasional despair, that it seems to me an immense good to be with her; how much greater, my dear, dear child I cannot tell you, if you were with me. . . . . Dear sweet little Posy! does she say "hark!" or only listen? Well, that is enough. It proves that she has not to be sent to school to learn that sounds signify something. I want to see the little thing amazingly. I am very observant of William's notices of her, because I think he is theoretically a little English, and honors the Englishman who passed his countryman in the desert without speaking. I wish you would tell him I shall observe the strictest privacy, and if in fact, the baby does now

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Fanny Kemble Butler.

and then give him immense pleasure, as I shrewdly suspect, he need not confide it to you alone under an injunction of secrecy.

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, Dec. 9, 1845.*

DEAREST KATE:

I did not write to you on Sunday, because I made two visits to the furnace to see a poor old skeleton of a Frenchman, who can neither speak nor understand English, who has recently lost his son and only child, and has been turned out of his house for which he paid three hundred dollars in current money, who is miserably sick and going to die, and who is quite curious to find out, if he can, why Isaac Newbury, who sold him the house and took the money for it, should now have a better title than he who paid for it. This was a case, you perceive, where a poor old foreigner was entitled to some explanation as to the peculiar laws and customs of the "great asylum of strangers," and I thought it my duty to take Bess, and explain to him that his afflictions were only temporary, for if he died, it was hardly worth while to contest his title to an earthly tabernacle, and if he got well, we would certainly send Isaac Newbury and his affairs to the devil. I have no idea what Bess told him, nor how much he comprehended of what she did say. I only know he expressed great satisfaction in her visit, and unbounded confidence in my ability and disposition to set things to rights. . . . President Polk is for all Oregon, cost what it may, and the Great West, which is at present the great golden calf of all political worshippers, is now, to a man, calculating the profits that will be made by adding one hundred per cent. to the price of flour and provisions

in case war is declared, and their patriots care no more for the desolation of the Atlantic coast than a practical slave trader does for the horrors of the middle passage. The majority has conquered Texas and established slavery to make money; the North has yielded to it for the sake of sharing in the spoils; and now if the majority conquers Oregon for the same purposes, they must put up with it, though the labors of centuries are swept away. The poor slaveholders did not dream when they raised the whirlwind, that they could not direct the storm. The wind has now taken another tack, and is likely to sweep with fury from the North West. The black clouds are fearfully gathering over the Southern States, and I have seen to-day an article from the *Mobile Register* in which an appalling picture is drawn of the desolation, destruction and misery that awaits the South in case the misconduct of the Government should get us into war. It is some consolation to see the cry of distress and fear first coming in peals from the conspirators; but it is awful to think of the doom they will have brought upon themselves, if there is not wisdom enough in the councils of the nation to put an effectual check upon the passions of the people. I have seen the letters of Mr. Appleton and Mr. Lawrence to the Anti Texas Committee, and they do not satisfy me. How in God's name any Massachusetts man can refuse to sign a protest against the annexation of Texas with an unalterable slave constitution, at *any time* or at the request of *anybody*, I cannot well understand.

To his wife.

*Boston, Saturday, Jan. 31, 1846.*

TO ELIZABETH B. SEDGWICK and ELIZABETH D. SEDGWICK.

Ladies—you will perceive that I could not address you in a more endearing manner without gross hypocrisy. I think

it is possible that I may regain during my visit here, if it is fortunate, the sincere affection which I once felt for you both, and which I have been in the habit of expressing without the slightest affectation. But at this present moment, as you will shortly perceive, it is impossible for me to distinguish between the inconsiderateness of a too devoted affection on your part, and the abominable sin which you both perpetrated against me, by exacting from me, in the weakest moments of parting, a promise "that I would write to you by Saturday's mail." I cannot take any other view of the conduct of both of you than that it was outrageous to force me away from home, and then exact a promise that I would write a letter at a given time, thus converting that one thing that should be the free offering of the heart, the very inspiration of love, into a constrained act of tyranny. Did you not foresee, ladies, that on Friday I should walk my legs off slumping in the mud knee deep, that I should get too tired to go as I promised to see Huldah Pomeroy, that I should have to give some of the hours last night which Heaven has appointed ~~and~~ apart for balmy sleep to social unhappiness, that Patrick would be sick and absent, that I should wake up this morning at a late hour, that I should have to make my own fire, and should only succeed in making it go out, growing colder all the time in the process, that I should have to remove three layers of shirts before I could find one with the buttons on, strap my pantaloons over boots uncleaned and covered with mud, and come down unshaved to write this letter before breakfast, and then *carry* it to the United States afterwards.

I have finished my breakfast, and I think my mind is undergoing a change; and I begin already to doubt whether you did foresee the multiplied misfortunes that would beset me, and if you did, I am convinced you had no realizing sense of the bad



time of their happening ; in, short I forgive you, but be forever warned never again to ask for a letter, excepting the spirit of some absent friend should irresistibly move one to it.

Now let me tell you that I arrived at the hotel at twenty minutes past eight, gave Mr. B. his carpet-bag, and came here, where I met Miss Catherine, who arrived about an hour and a half before me. For your sake I enquired for Kate's baby, and being weary and in no mood to dispute anything, I let the whole room-full run on with accounts of her beauty, health, strength, goodness and superior intellect, with the silent attention of one who is receiving interesting information, and with the civil look of pleased credulity which I suppose a well-bred man is constrained to assume when his dearest friends are magnifying small matters, and are only saved from the mortification of a humbug by the solemn illusion of parental affection.

I feel quite incapable of doing justice to this child, and can only tell you what I see, that she is fat and hearty, with one tooth nearly as big as that of the mastodon, apt to smile, fond of kissing, and apparently knowing as much as the learned pig. The people are all well here and apparently happy.

To me.

*Lenox, June 5, 1846.*

DEAREST KATE :

I should have written you several days ago, for I do not know that I ever thought more about you in your absence than since you last left us ; but the fact is, as Doctor Shepard's lamp began to go out, I felt quite a desire to help pick up the wick and see it burn, and the last being quite a leisure week with me, I have given him a good deal of my time. I have never seen a person suffer so long and so much, with so little interval of ease, and I must say I never saw more

manly fortitude or Christian resignation, and as I could not appreciate, and therefore did not attend the Doctor's ministrations when in health, I felt the more bound to avail myself of his last teachings. If the five points of Calvinism tend, directly and naturally, to such an end as his, I shall get to have great faith in them; for surely I have hardly ever seen the lessons of patience and charity better illustrated than by minister and people. He has required for more than five weeks two persons, able-bodied, to be constantly about him, engaged in fatiguing duty, and for nearly two weeks three persons to hold him up bodily in the most uneasy positions (with occasional intervals of half an hour in twenty-four in bed), and during the whole time, so far as I know, there has been voluntary cheerful help enough, and no shirking, and on the part of the Doctor a great deal of gratitude, and no impatience or complaint. His reason lasted nearly to the last ten minutes, but his sufferings ceased only with his breath. His son and daughter have been with him all the time. Doctor Robert has hardly left the house for three weeks; in short, more could not have been done to uphold the Christian religion than to uphold the Doctor, and it could not have been done with more good will, apparently, if the services had been sure of being crowned with some great glory.

Now we shall have a splendid sermon on Friday from Doctor T., and the man has been so often with him in his illness that I hope it will not be entirely on his character as a *divine*. I told him last night if he would stay with the watchers four or five nights and see what they had to do, and how they did it, I thought he would have to modify *a little* his doctrine of *total* depravity. Great arrangements will be made for the funeral; something, I hope, to satisfy Wilson that they are worthy of the Chants. I wish you could be here.

I went yesterday to see ——; there is hardly anybody that I pity more, hardly anybody that I know that with so little strength and experience has so hard a task. The old lady is very helpless, her wants are incessant, and poor ——, for aught that I can see, has no prospect before her for years but that of living to dry up the juices of youth in a bad air, the perpetual washing of dishes without a feast, scrubbing floors without a dance, dressing without the expectation of a pleasure or a smile, and undressing without any very strong hope of repose. This is paying pretty dear by so young a thing for the pleasure of a good conscience, a sort of thrusting of the kingdom of heaven upon one before he has a chance to know that this world is not quite enough for an immortal creature; but perhaps, after all, this is rather a dreary, gloomy, unphilosophical view of the case.

To me.

*Lenox, Wednesday, Feb. 25, 1846.*

MY DEAR KATE:

I have had an unwonted excitement since Friday morning last, when I heard at Pittsfield the news from the steamer. Perhaps that excitement and my hopes prevent me from seeing the true extent and bearing of Mr. Peel's new measures and speeches, but I cannot help looking upon it as intended to be a public profession of the principles of the Christian religion, by the head of a great nation, and a recommendation to adopt them in practice for the intercourse of nations. It seems to me like the dawn of the millenium, when a party man abjures the selfish system which he has all his life time upheld, and recommended to the world, and made converts to; when he forsakes the class which embraces nearly all the great, rich, and powerful, whose sympathy he has enjoyed, whose interests have been

confided to his hands, and who have conferred upon him his representation and power, and goes for the interests of the poor; in short, when he confesses his errors, and takes up the cross, despising the shame. I know it is said that starvation has combined the masses against the aristocracy, and the universal clamor against the monopoly has frightened the minister into this great change for expediency and for power; but I don't sympathize with those who judge him uncharitably, he has done right and nobly, and he should have the credit that belongs to a man who has acted wisely and conferred great benefits upon mankind. If I could will it, guns should be fired, bells rung, bonfires made, and Paixhan guns *burst*ed from Maine to California for a general jubilee, and yet I have hardly seen a person or a paragraph, that makes any more of this news, than they would of a fancy ball at Windsor Castle, or another baby born to Victoria. I was quite distressed by Bryant's cool mention of it, and a little surprised that Veto had not given one burst of enthusiasm. Do tell T. to say something about the English Reformation. The coming in of the latter day saints from the English aristocracy.

To me.

*Lenox, March, 1846.*

MY DEAR SISTER:

. . . . . Now I am upon the subject of my will, I wish to ask you if there is any hint you can give me, in case I should happen to be first taken away, so that whatever else happens then, I may leave a sweet and pleasant feeling, where I *know* all my life long it has been one of my chiefest desires to do it. I am quite sorry that you should be troubled about my health. It is remarkably good. Do not make yourself uneasy upon this score.

I do not think either of us can be sufficiently thankful for extraordinary, unwonted, uninterrupted affection and confidence for so many years, without leaving the future trustingly and cheerfully to the disposal of Divine Providence. I could wish for your sake, not for my own, to survive you, but do not let us talk about these matters; it is sufficient for us both to know that we shall have loved *till death*, and that we hope to live and love forever.

I am getting rich now, and I think I shall grow miserly. Perhaps it is a kind dispensation of Providence, that boys in college save their parents the curse of laying up treasure for moths. Willie may guard my memory in this respect. I don't know what would become of me if one of my children should turn out worthless. I can never be prepared for, or reconciled to such a calamity. Hitherto I have enjoyed much from them, and suffered comparatively little.

I am quite delighted to hear that you have so much to do with the prison folks. I wish you would give me a clearer idea of what it is.

I suppose you have seen Mrs. Childe's account of the prisoners sent from Sing-Sing to work in the mine at the West. They all wanted to go, though told that they must work harder in the mine than at Sing-Sing, and must work *in chains*. I think there were one hundred and forty odd. One degree of liberty was given them after another, till the chains were taken off the whole, and they slept in a shanty, guarded by four men. Three or four proposed to kill the keepers, all the rest resisted and were true. It is a nice story. My little boy Leonard continues to behave well and improve. He read me yesterday the Sermon on the Mount.

There is a poor little devil about ten years old in jail, sent

for stealing a *penknife*, for ninety days. He has almost cried his eyes out, and says he must go out, or he shall die. I think I shall discharge him at the end of thirty days, and then look up the law for it.

*Lenox, March 29, 1846.*

DEAREST BELLE:

I have been very much pleased with your letters, and flattered with the number of them, considering your reluctance to writing, and as Mr. — would say the consequent “*vertu*” of the act, and so much I should have said to express my thanks before, but in my leisure time I have been so much taken up with four pictorials that Sumner sent me, (by the way he ought to edit an American *Punch*, he is so funny), that I really was not able to transcribe the only meritorious thing that, after a careful perusal, I found therein. I will tell it now, as your mother and Lizzie have gone to bed and I have been *somnambulist* at Mrs. Allen’s. It was a story of an old English woman of the Wolstoncraft order, but without her standing or genius, and who consequently could not perceive the merit of the irregular life she had been leading. Somehow or other, an illegitimate *pauper* excites neither the imagination nor enthusiasm of the parent, nor the sympathy of mankind, and this old woman, finding her day greater than her strength, went to the parish for consolation, and with this most embarrassing question, “What shall I do?” “Keep the commandments.” “How many be there?” “Ten.” “I have nothing but these hands,” said she, “and I can’t do it and I *won’t*—the priest ought to keep ’em.” She was right, poor soul. The priest was a wretch. I have not the least doubt that with a good fat living he never kept more than five himself, and he had no business to break her back by dumping ten at a time on her.

To Mrs. Jane Sedgwick in New York.

*Lenox, March 31, 1846.*

. . . . . If I could edit a *Berkshire Punch* and find some one who has art and fancy enough to illustrate it, I should be greatly tempted to hit off some of the follies which make up life, and sometimes quite a commotion in our little village communities. But you will not care to hear, unless some one with the art of *Punch* should tell you, how near the little Episcopal church in Stockbridge came to being blown up, and *why* it is at this moment that there is one stone left standing on another, nor how it has been permitted that the Lord's heritage in Lee, committed to the keeping of Sheldon's son-in-law, after being watched over and prayed for by that eminent saint, Dr. Hyde, who for fifty years seldom smiled, and was never known to laugh outright, is utterly swept away. Yes, Jeanie, the Lee candlestick is gone, quite gone out of its place, and Lee, in spite of its chair, and paper, and carriage factories, is worse off than Sardis or Thyatira. The Bond that held it together for years is broken; the doctor of divinity has had to give way to a doctor of medicine; but this is right. The Lord will bring good out of evil. Bond was audacious; he despised the command to be wise as a serpent, and presumed to admit Dr. G. into the church without the consent of Dr. W. You may depend upon it, this is the beginning of the thousand years when the devil is to be let loose. He first swung his tail round last May at Baltimore,<sup>1</sup> and ever since there has been a terrible confusion of ideas, and people don't know what to think, what to believe, nor *what to do*. Even the saints in Lenox are wandering about like sheep without a shepherd, and without the help of the sinners, there is no prospect of their ever being folded again, for they are like so many rams butting

<sup>1</sup> At the Baltimore Convention.

their heads together. Even Ward, Wilson and I, the great conservatives of social order, talk of subverting Mr. Curtis's livery because he has turned up William Bates, our favorite. Post, our neighbor, is going to blow up the Lenox academy, the great seat of science in Berkshire County, because his boy froze his ears last winter. The same confusion reigns in families as in public affairs, and old mother P., who married a man for the fun of being a second wife and a stepmother, is walking the streets like a skeleton, entering all our houses and trying to hunt up compassion because she is turned out of a good two story brick house, and her husband's children swear that she shall have no peace in his. Yes, dear Jeanie, there is great disorder in our communities; the walls of Zion are breaking down.

To Governor Swain of New Bedford, after reading an unpublished memoir of his son Robert, who had recently died.

*Lenox, May 10, 1864.*

MY DEAR MR. SWAIN:

The memoir which you were so kind as to send, only reached me just before I left home, and I have had no opportunity to read it till to-day. I thank you for it most sincerely. It has brought tears into my eyes more than once, and that is a luxury I seldom have. I cannot perceive any exaggeration in your estimate of your son's character, and this seems to me very wonderful, considering the time and the circumstances under which your part of it was written. His character seems to me very extraordinary, for the peculiar misfortune of his early life, and his very fortunate condition, though not perhaps altogether adverse to his manliness and strength, were peculiarly unfavorable (if our judgments are to be guided by the common experience of life) to that delicacy, modesty, sweetness and mag-



nanimity which were his crowning beauties. Judging from the whole tone and tenor of his journal and letters, which seem to me to be free from affectation of every sort, and from the delusions which are so common to young persons, I should think that the letter to his physician in New Bedford was the key to his character. That remarkable and exquisite production could be called, I think, without fancy, a heavenly messenger, for though it conveyed to you and to his mother tidings of an inevitable sorrow, and the greatest that could await either of you in this world, it revealed a spirit made perfect through suffering, whose mission here was fulfilled, and which was fit for happiness in a higher sphere of existence. What a misfortune it is that we cannot always realize, as we do sometimes realize, how utterly insignificant is the period of earthly probation to those who have accomplished the objects of life, and how much greater a misfortune it is to those who, like you and myself, have suffered the greatest possible bereavement, that we cannot always preserve that clear vision of a loving child departing in peace and hope and joy at the moment of its most conscious and intense affection, and thereby giving us what we can get in no other way so well, if we can get it in any other way at all, a most comfortable hope of our own immortality, of a reunion with those we have truly loved. Afflictions like yours and mine, are often spoken of as judgments. For one, I do not so consider them, and I am sure you do not, and I do not see how they can be considered so by anybody who really believes in another life, or who has had his mind in any degree opened to the difference between this and another, by a separation from one whose affections did in truth constitute his highest happiness. It is my fervent desire and prayer, my dear friend, that we may live worthy of these dear children, whom God in His good and holy providence has made our ancestors.

To William Minot, Jr.

*Lenox, May 24, 1846.*

. . . . . I postponed writing with the intention of giving you a statement of my own affairs; whatever good reason I had to give why the laying up of property has never been in my line; and my principles, so far as I have had any principles, in regard to the present and future disposition of it. . . . . When my father died, I believe it was his intention, as I had remained with him, to give me a larger share of his property than the rest of the boys, and he accordingly gave me what he set a very high estimate upon, his house and lands in Stockbridge, and his library. . . . . My brothers were residuary legatees, and I believe their shares exceeded mine in amount and were productive. However, I have never known or inquired what it was, having made up my mind that no question of property, as far as I was concerned, should ever weaken the bond which united us; and it never has, thank God. I have always had enough; but you perceive that being left with a large establishment to be kept up, and that during my minority, and with no income but from land, my expenses must immediately and constantly have gone far beyond my means. I thought it much more meritorious to borrow money than to shut up my house or essentially alter the course of living to which I had been accustomed in my father's house, and consequently I got a good deal in debt before I had the least conception what a sublime doctrine it is to owe no man anything. . . . . I have always thought it a dishonor to a man not to preserve for his children whatever inheritance he received, unless his circumstances were very peculiar, and therefore I think I have not done my duty with what I received, but I want the benefit of my early condition (in some

respects peculiar); not to save me from the *reproaches* of my children — I do not fear that calamity — but to secure, as far as justice will allow it, their charitable judgment.

To me.

*Lake Huron, May 28, 1846.*

MY DEAR KATE:

You have made a blunder that you never came over these beautiful lakes, and I have made a greater blunder in consenting to come here for the first time without you. However I shall endeavor to repair that, by coming here next summer with you, if we live so long. Here, as everywhere I go, your name is my passport to attention and respect, and besides the invisible bond which in all situations is so strengthening to the inner man, I have great vicarious advantages, which are not to be despised. Theodore<sup>1</sup> is very kind, very pleasant, and so far as I can judge, as unselfish a travelling companion as a man could meet with or desire, and moreover, he has an extraordinary consideration and delicacy that must make his manners as charming to strangers, as they are grateful and delightful to me. I wish you were with us and particularly with him. It is really delightful to be with him where he is free from all sorts of constraint and care, and can give free play to his social, affectionate qualities. What a misfortune it is, that a man should be so immersed in business that very few of his best friends can adequately know or appreciate him; but I had no purpose to write a letter about him—that topic will keep till I come home.

<sup>1</sup> His nephew Theodore Sedgwick.

To his wife.

*Lake Michigan, June 5, 1846.*

I bought an exceeding pretty Indian box for Bessie when I stopped at Mackinaw, and carried it in my hand all the way across the prairies to Joe's, and from there to Barrington half way to Chicago, and left it at the nastiest tavern in Illinois! at the only place I have seen where I could not eat. The bread consisted of flapjacks and hot cakes, and there was no way of eating the eggs but with German silver spoons of which nothing remained but the nasty yellow corrosive brass, in addition to which the black mud of Illinois was an inch deep on the floor. The rain drove in at the door where the landlord was smoking a *pipe*, and two of our fellow travellers were an Irish bog-trotter and his bare-legged sister just from Ireland, who had walked through the mud from Chicago knee deep. This creature, who was more animal and less human than any two legged thing I ever saw, seized two eggs from the bowl, which I presume she took for turnips or potatoes, for she instantly dropped them back again, and is probably one of those *vestiges* of creation which, having all the feelings of humanity but the illuminated part, suggested the theory of progressive orders contained in that work. Theodore, whose philosophy and good nature have never left him, ate like a campaigner, and sitting between me and this she-bear, seemed to enjoy his dinner, flap-jacks, brass spoons and all.

I began this letter with the warmest affection for you and very amiable feelings towards all my family, but the boat has somehow acquired a peculiar motion, which gives salt or *fresh water* at sea the properties of saltpetre on land, and that, you know, utterly destroys the affections. I am now watching the

process on my own mind, as the man did his sensations under the influence of charcoal. There is nothing here by which I can exactly test the state of my feelings towards my family, but my mind is yet right as I know, for behind me is a man stretched on a long chair directly in front of my state-room, and I have been twice into the state-room in four minutes for no other purpose of moment, but to kick off his legs each time I stepped over the settee. I kicked him so hard the last time that to my regret he has moved and barricaded Theodore's door. T. is stretched in his berth and did not come out to dinner. It has so happened that in going up and coming down, the fine Mackinaw trout were offered me when I would as soon have had salt junk. If I had continued writing after breakfast, instead of waiting till now to conclude my letter, I should have sent my love to each by name, including "Sam and Annie," but I can only do it now in a general way, for any hypocrisy is quite out of place in a big steamboat on the Western waters. If I do not add any more, I pray you to believe that I *was*, and to *hope* that I *shall be*, the loving father of my children and your loving husband. I shall add nothing but that I have a faint hope that I shall soon recover the wonted and sincere affection with which I have till now subscribed myself

Your devoted

C. S.

To me.

Lenox, Feb. 22, 1847.

There has been here, last week, a conference of the churches and a week full of meetings in Lenox. The whole tendency, as I think, of the sermons and *prayers* yesterday, was to inspire *fear*, not *faith*.

To-night we are to have our Irish meeting, and it is possible

it may dispel some of the clouds. I thought the other day I would test the merit of "the one idea of Revival" system, and I stopped in at ——'s, just before a meeting was to be gathered, and told him I wanted to consult him about an Irish subscription. He said he was "penniless." "Never mind," said I, "we want a meeting, and as there will be great numbers from all parts of the town, perhaps it would be well to give notice to-night." He said "that *would not* do. People's minds were now too much engaged." "Great God!" I exclaimed, etc., etc., etc., and we parted, —— thinking me *probably* a profane, ungodly wretch, beyond the reach of prayer, and I thinking of him that he had fasted and prayed till his bowels of compassion were all gone, not so good as cat-gut, not fit for fiddle strings. It is a delicate business, this professing godliness. It requires an honest conscience, and a generous faith — for the most part the church is a clumsy contrivance to separate one portion of sinners from another, without benefit to either class; the one is taught to hate faith, and the other to decry charity, and both lose their good sense and humility.

April 16, 1847.

DEAREST BELLE:

I have just got your letter. A large pile of my father's and mother's letters which I have recently discovered at Stock-bridge, make me look upon these things just now as *treasures* that increase immensely in value by lapse of time; and if I thought that my letters, now or hereafter, could give a tenth part of a tithe of the pleasure to my children that I have now in reading those of my parents, I certainly should not look upon them in the poor light that I do. . . . Last night the Wards were here in great spirits; the Parson also. I read

Cicero on friendship, parts of which are wonderful for those times. In the darkest ages, there have been God's witnesses, men on whom the light of immortality was shed.

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, May 10, 1847.*

. . . . . There is philosophy, I suppose, in the whole of life, in its pains and pleasures, and whilst you have been too constantly and happily engaged to be jealous of any negligent friend, or envious of any superior condition, I have been so absorbed in contrivances to carry off the waste water from my house, that I have become supremely indifferent to the conduct and opinions of the whole world, and even to the calamities of nations; the Irish, for instance. My drain is stopped; I have opened it; there stands the stagnant pool of soap suds. Daily, for three days, I have stood over it, looked towards the house, contemplated the destiny of barrels of soap suds to be dashed into it daily, and curl papers enough to dam the Merrimac, and I turn to George Sabine<sup>1</sup> for relief. He cannot consent to have a drain carried through his garden. I go to George Walker,<sup>1</sup> he sends me to the Judge; the Judge is afraid! I go to bed in the pious hope of that joy that cometh in the morning, and when I wake, I wonder at that luxurious idleness of mankind which is amused by traditions of Lola Montes, the Pope of Rome, the Mexican war, and death by starvation. I have come to the conclusion that there is but one misery in life, and that is *not knowing what to do*; and as for the proverbs of Solomon accounted wise, I think them the silliest things on earth. The most accepted of all, is that about a multitude of counsellors, a theory which Jews and Christians

<sup>1</sup> His opposite neighbors.

ought to have known better than to swallow because Solomon was a great man, just as our people have swallowed the American system from Henry Clay. Whereas every experienced person knows that the farther he goes for advice, the more he is puzzled, and the consequence *generally* is, that he either becomes imbecile from confusion, or, if he must have relief in action, it is from adopting the poorest opinion he gets. But I will turn from this disagreeable subject to congratulate you, (that I have the heart to do any such thing is an agreeable surprise to me,) upon the successful issue of your affairs.<sup>1</sup> Everything I hear of them, and of you and William as connected therewith, is pleasant, even to the one stair that the carpet was too short to cover.

William *has* grown in grace, or circumstances have more to do with the happiness of the best of us than we are willing to acknowledge. That he should be indifferent to the appearance of a naked stair, seems saint-like, since I am assured it does not come from exhaustion. I mean in the first days of my prosperity to get a silver plate for that stair, with a suitable inscription and device; something worthy of a man of extraordinary taste, looking up the stairway through the skylight, serenely at the *stars*. If, when you come here, I have accomplished my drain, which I intend to do if I make an aqueduct as big and as long as that from Long Pond, I shall expect to sit with you under the shade of Cook's maples, and contemplate that lofty garret where poor —— was obliged to be stowed away flat-wise, but where in the days of his reform he can walk erect like a man, and look with delight on the two new chimneys to which, I flatter myself, you have nothing to be compared in beauty. I judge of this only from the time the masons have

<sup>1</sup> His daughter was then just established in her newly built house at Woodbourne.



occupied about them. I do not know the style, and nobody has made a remark upon them or probably seen them. In the course of a week, if I get time and recover my spirits, I shall hire a few waiting witnesses at a low rate, to sit on the ground and look at the chimneys. I think this will attract public attention to them, and perhaps induce Mrs. Cleveland and Mary Dwight to come up and look at them before Mrs. Cleveland builds at Pine Bank. I should be glad if she would do this.

I like to think of your little group and your family tea parties in your new home, and little Posy careering about there with a will strong enough for the owner. This is a pleasure great enough now for you young people, and more to be enjoyed, as you turn your thoughts occasionally to the seniors of your family, and contemplate their greater joy in waiting to welcome their long absent, much tried, well behaved, accomplished and most worthily loved son,<sup>1</sup> as he returns to them laden with knowledge of all sorts, character more than could be asked for, and regrets only from those who have parted from him. I cannot express what I feel of sympathy with Mr. and Mrs. Minot on this occasion. It is worthy of Providence to shower down upon them in this form before they die, the kind of happiness they value most, in such full measure. . . . I am glad that your mother is out of this nasty turmoil of the house. Give her my love; if I get out of the drain, I will write to her.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Francis Minot, just about to return from Europe, where he had been three years studying medicine.

To me.

*Lenox, May 19, 1847.*

DEAR KATE:

. . . . . I have a serious discomfort in regard to the Irish people who were to come, from the fear that they have been imposed upon, and delayed to make room for others whose passages were not paid beforehand. I hear nothing from any of them, and the distress of their friends here is very great. I sent their passage certificates February 1st, and they should have been here a month ago.

For the last twenty-five years of my brother's life, the Irish have been flooding our country. He saw that their ignorance exposed them to the cupidity of our people, their prevailing vice. He befriended them in every way, saved them from unfair advantages, helped them with advice and instruction, made out their papers for naturalization without charge, remitted their generous returns to their friends, and taught them how, at the least expense, to bring their relatives after them. Their fervid hearts were grateful for these services, and more than one *effused* their sentiment by saying, "If Mr. Sedgwick will be governor, it's we that will make him that same." On one occasion, when he appeared at the door of the Catholic church in Pittsfield, to be present at the marriage of one of his servants, the priest called out to the packed and pressing congregation, "Make way there, will ye! make way for Mr. Sedgwick and his daughter!" then proceeded in the unstinted phrases of his people to set forth my brother's virtues, and their obligations to him, while the bridal party waited!

And when the last respect was to be paid to all that was mortal of my brother, a large body of these people prayed that they might have the privilege of bearing him on their shoulders six miles to our burial place.

But it was not to the Irish stranger alone that he extended the offices of brotherhood; the wants of Italians, Poles, Ger-

mans, Hungarians, were met as if those wants were claims on an honest man, glad to pay his debts. The following is an extract from a letter to T. C. H. Smith, accompanying a Magyar whom he sent to Mr. S.'s protection.

I was troubled at the idea of throwing Sabo on your hands. It seemed a little like a trick, for which one could not be reproached, to avoid one's own troubles and throw a burden upon a friend. Of all the Hungarians, Sabo has impressed me most favorably. I feel very confident that he is a nice fellow, not one of those human machines, like an old carriage, to which one must give a moment's thought to determine whether it shall be put in gear and on the track, or whether it shall be thrown off as unprofitable; but rather a human being out of place, away from home, with thoughts and affections and a soul in him. I can't help hoping that his faculties will come into cheerful play somewhere, and that you will not find this one of those gritting self-sacrifices that fill a man's mouth full of gravel and hurt his swallow; but more like the bread cast upon the waters, which comes back after many days, such a light, well-baked loaf as to be quite palatable and of ready digestion, and that turns into chyle, and throws a light over the face quite indescribable—in short, something that makes a man feel good, and feeling good, contented to say nothing.

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, July 4, 1847.*

. . . . . I have thought many times since I left you of the great pleasure of my visit to you, so novel in some of its circumstances, and if I had not been very busy I should have told you without waiting for your letter, that while I was with you I had but one regret, and that was the necessity of coming back so soon.

If I were capable of it, nothing would please me better than a metaphysical analysis of my feelings on that occasion, for I am really quite curious to know what it was that produced for so long a period as ten days, that extraordinary quietness and contentment of my mind, that sweet peace and tranquillity that required no new element to perfect it, and which was not for one moment disturbed by any spirit of criticism, any secret feeling that all was not right, or any, the slightest, *fear* of change. . . . Seriously, dear Kate, I did enjoy my visit to you, your happiness and William's; and there was one thing of which I did not speak, which enters deeply into my heart. It was your established Sunday service. This is beginning right in the most important of all matters. It is a good, (religious observance of some sort in a family, I mean), that children are entitled to from their parents, and can get in no other way; which they should become familiar with early, and remember from their infancy as they grow up. To my mind it is one of the most melancholy things on earth that cant, formality and superstition should ever have been introduced into the simple, natural, affectionate, family worship of parents and children. It has done much to make it an austere and useless service, and has no doubt often prevented it altogether, for there is nothing perhaps which an honest, affectionate, young heart more shrinks from than the mockery of forms in such matters. . . . Give to my little darling Posy a dozen kisses — a thousand, if you can make the little brainless thing comprehend a tithe of the meaning of one of them.

To William Minot, Jr., after the birth of his daughter Alice.

*Lenox, July 20, 1847.*

. . . . . I don't know which to admire most in your last letter, respecting the name of the deodand, your experience of human nature, or that remarkable use of language which enables you almost in one sentence most delicately to consult our tastes, and at the same time most prudently to preserve your own fancy in any event. It is certainly a *sleight of mind* by which one magnanimously throws himself into the minds of his friends, and guards his reserved rights as independently as if he had none. There was some tact, too, in addressing that last letter to me, for perhaps you know I am the only person in the whole connection whose conscience would not compel him to thrust two or three names upon you, with the most absurd expectation that one of them must be inevitably chosen. There are only two or three points of metaphysical morality that I profess to understand, two or three points of virtue in which I am sure to commend myself to universal esteem as a person of sound judgment; one is not to give even a hint or suggestion where my advice is not asked point blank, and another is to discover that the action or decision of a friend, the moment it becomes irrevocable, is the precise thing that I particularly desired. I shall therefore not communicate to you the serious discussions that have been had at Lenox or Stockbridge, in regard to the proper name of the new comer, or give you any clue to the difference of opinion upon the subject that for a time created considerable social agitation in our family circle. Nor shall I mention the two names, one of which everybody was quite certain the young lady should have; and in return for this most friendly absti-

nence, I shall expect you to give me the earliest information of the name you shall have decided upon. When it cools off a little, I shall write to Kate. In the meantime, tell her that the only reason why we do not fret ourselves into a fever in this hot weather is that our suffering is mitigated by your accounts of her. . . . Three days, Robert and Mary and I, Willie, and two of Bob's children, spent in Canaan, Salisbury and Mt. Washington, and for three days we escaped the embraces of friends and the intrusion of strangers, a circumstance that, without any disparagement to the social affections or a liberal curiosity, might well give a *zest at this season* to the pleasure of that unparalleled drive, to persons who can't go ten rods without running *butt* against Wilson's corner. . . . Yesterday morning we went down, Robert and I, to breakfast at Uncle Robert's<sup>1</sup>, but Stockbridge is now getting too populous; civilities are to be paid there at different houses, and unless a man can get courage enough to adopt the Mexican costume, a broad brimmed hat and a pair of spurs, and sit in his ideas under the shade of his own maples, it is impossible to be cool or tranquil.

To me.

*August, 1847.*

MY DEAR SISTER.

. . . . . I went yesterday to dine with Robert, at Susan's, and Bessy brought me your letter and William's note. I excused you for not writing during the hot weather, and the more readily because I had not the energy to write myself. The last week has been very hot, and for a fortnight there has been very little rain, just enough, however, to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Watts.

keep the vegetation from suffering. The season on the whole has been as nearly perfect as I can conceive of.

I have had Goodrich examining the premises on the wing side to see what could be done for your comfort there. It would give me unspeakable comfort if you could get a room at my house, that you should prefer to any other on earth; since however, we have both visited Woodbourne, I can hardly hope for anything so good in this world, unless Providence should see fit to burn up my house and give me another. Old as I am, and short as the remnant of my life may be, my last days would certainly be among my best, if I could provide you the snuggest and sweetest apartment that ever was inhabited, one where every breeze from the southwest should fan you with delicious ether, and where you could neither hear nor feel the northern blast; where the light should be tempered to weak eyes, and refresh and strengthen them with perpetual beauty.

Your account of Kate is charming. I wish I could see her now, and so I wish always. You must know that though I fully approve of the ether experiment, I have some misgivings about the final results. I do not feel quite sure that if a mother is made to forget when a child is born, she won't as a natural consequence forget the child afterwards, and no more look after it, if it happens to drop into a well, than she would for a thimble that should drop in. If the Bible is an inspired book, it seems to me very clear that the Lord never expected that a woman in travail would take that particular time to go to sleep, and in fact it seems to me to stand to reason that if a woman don't know what she is about then, but actually falls asleep in the very worst of it, that the baby might have a terrible belly-ache or even the croup without disturbing her nap. I suppose it will take about twenty years to find out whether the free use

of ether is perfectly compatible with natural affection, or whether it is worth while to try to thwart the divine contrivance for bodily pain.

It is well, perhaps, that the experiment should begin and be perfected in the very centre of the highest civilization, where the divinity of Theodore Parker will undoubtedly get far above the doctrines of revealed religion, where Long Pond and the railroads all come together. Boston is a great place—next to Woodbourne, undoubtedly the first!

I hear that Shaw has returned. I have been expecting to see a plan for building a cathedral to cover the Common, a place where Pope Pius will finally reign, by which time I suppose that little New Zealander Posy will repent of her cannibal habits, do penance, and receive absolution over the remains of those she has eaten.

The world is wide awake; the excitement is not confined to the new towns springing up near Boston, nor to those that are to spring up on Connecticut River, to the libraries and observatories of Abbot Lawrence, nor to the house of Capt. Lincoln, or the *affecting* letter of Capt. Lincoln's father; but even here the population is spreading; great men like Bleecker, and great women like Mrs. ——— are constantly thronging. It is even rumored that the late minister to Holland, in the prime of life, may plant a country residence on the banks of the beautiful Housatonic.

I have not attempted to give you an account of the strangers that visit us, for the scene is so constantly shifting, and the horizon of our intellectual sphere is so constantly extending, that the completest picture of our life to-day, would be by the time it reached you, only a *fragmentary* tradition. Indeed, I doubt if any where one can have a better *coup d'oeil* of the



grand drama than here. The whole is within a stone's throw of us. On the hill at Ingall's dwell F. and S., the last a German scholar, patriot, and exile, devoted to learning, liberty, and the church — at Cook's the Watsons — at Hotchkin's the ——s, at Hewett's some people whose name and lineage, thank heaven, I do *not* know — at Wilson's people of all nations, kindred, and degree; and, last of all, that d——d Lord of "the middle ages" — and then from Curtis's and Holden's and Quincy's come reeking every hot day, German professors and musicians, and that little spiked, sputtering Fabre, more frightful than a Mexican lama. Here, in Lenox, is tragedy, comedy, tragi-comedy, with occasionally pretty little love passages by E. S., and a beautiful episode by S. F. Just east of us is Mrs. Haggerty, bright and shining all the time. Below us we can learn in a moment a perfect system of prison discipline, from Louis Dwight.

Mr. Field defines the limits of constitutional power, so that every man who has a map of the Illinois River can tell where Congress can take out a snag, and where they can't — and from him, for pastime, we pass through the fields of theology where there is, perhaps, not much to be gleaned, and go to the fountain of philosophy, the enlightened Bleecker, whose information is extensive, accurate, free from prejudice, whose philosophy is unbounded and *no joke*.

By the way, the other day at the dinner table he took out his pocketbook, and from it a gay-colored and embossed card, which he seemed to be studying, "What is dat," said his little wife. "A ticket to the cemetery," he answered, in a manner less playful than usual; whereupon it was difficult for those persons not always disposed to solemn awe, to keep their countenances from doing violence to so solemn a scene.

Kate, you ought to be here now. You would get your mind enlightened, at any rate refreshed, by that most natural, simple, frank and cordial of all persons, Mrs. Haggerty.

To William Minot, Jr.

Oct. 23, 1847.

. . . . . I think aunt Jane, since Hal's arrival, has entered upon her future state. I should have no doubt of it if there did not seem to me to be still a slightly gravitating tendency in her heavenly body. Her face is, as it were, the face of an angel, quite too serene for an earthly paradise.

Give my love to my wife and my three children. I never felt such a reward of *disinterested* affection in parting with them before, boarding them all out without the trouble of moving or the fear of a bill. I kiss Posy. It is said nothing exists without a name, therefore I suppose you have no other child, nothing but a romance in real life which I have never seen.

To his wife.

Lenox, Oct. 29, 1847.

MY DEAR LIZZIE :

I understand they bring the common report that provisions in Ireland are abundant and cheap. I am so sick of this graceless exclamation from a parcel of wretches who have not a cent to bring with them, and who use up the blood and sinews of their children to get here, in order to keep from starving, that I cannot help wishing, in my nervous moods, that the Irish nation, island and all, were submerged in the sea. My views of the plan of Providence respecting them, are sometimes more enlarged than this, and my indignation against the

Irish sinks into a general contempt for the meanness of human nature. . . . .

I spent a portion of the last Sunday in company with St. Paul. I think that one such person in a century would keep a continent from sinking. The sight of such a man, and the faintest conception of what was in him, would make the faces of those who had souls shine with a noble purpose, like the stars of the firmament; so that all beholding them should know that they were men created in the image of God, and the rest, the monkeys without tails and the herds of swine, should be driven into the sea.

. . . . .

I must tell you, Lizzie, an anecdote that I heard, I think from Mr. Peabody, about a Millerite who had a second wife, and prepared to ascend before the world came to an end. His wife was putting on her ascension robes to accompany him, when he turned and exclaimed to her, that he wished to ascend with his *first wife*. The feeling instantly came into my mind that I certainly belonged to the latter day saints, for if I am ever married again, my wish and determination is finally to *ascend* with you.

To me.

Nov., 1847.

DEAR KATE:

I have not been to Stockbridge, partly because I have been too busy, but chiefly because it is so long and *tedious* a journey. I begin to feel, like old Jefferson, a desire to burrow through the winter. I am rejoiced you talk of coming back — the sooner the better, always, when you have enough of being away! I suppose you have observed that I never say a word

to prevent your going anywhere at any time, and I hope you know the reason as well as the fact. I hate monopolies. The worst monopoly is that of love and friendship. It interferes with the claims of others better than we, and it prevents freedom, the greatest boon. In regard to you, who are drawn many ways, desired by all nearly always — whose heart embraces so many, and where there is often difficulty of choice and *weakness of will*, I consider it to be particularly wrong to throw a straw in the way of your free choice. I am, I trust, in some measure thankful for the time that is allotted to Lenox — for your affection, that which took up the care that my father and mother laid down, and has kept it faithfully and without wavering to this day. I have secret thoughts which, if you please, you may trust for all the time that God, in his goodness, gives us together.

To his daughter, after the death of her eldest child at the age of three years.

*Lenox, Nov. 28, 1847.*

MY DEAR KATE AND MY DEAR WILLIAM:

For some time after I heard of the loss of our darling the one thought that she was gone, stood alone in my mind, and I could not think of one of you or one of us, without a deeper and deeper melancholy, for surely, if the event had been left to our poor wisdom, there is hardly a sacrifice that you, or any of us, would not have deemed far easier and *better*. For some time my wife and my sister could not be comforted, especially my poor sister, and I could not recover from the narrow and bitter view of our common affliction. But floods of tears will not drown or wash away a real sorrow. When the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, there is but one

helper; I bowed myself in submission to the Father of Spirits, and with my whole soul implored him to give us his blessing; to commune with our hearts, that the greatest of his teachings might not be lost upon us; that the wonderful love he had kindled in our hearts for this beautiful child might not be buried with it in the grave, that it might follow her angel spirit to the heaven it has entered, in reverent submission to his will, and with perfect faith in his wisdom and goodness; that he would take away from our hearts the veil of sadness which clouded our vision, that this little child might still dwell with us as a messenger of love from heaven, lifting our hearts above all low desires and filling them with a larger, worthier, more loving life. A night or two after I had offered this prayer, I saw the form of this dear child. She was lying on a couch beside me; she suddenly started, rested on her elbow, turned her countenance upon me; not a feature nor a line of her form was changed, but her face was radiant with love and joy and beauty. I started instantly from sleep, but the vision was gone. She had turned to behold the face of her Father in heaven; she is now like him, for she "sees him as he is." For one such vision as this of Charlie, I would joyfully give my life. I have never experienced in my own nature, in any one exercise of its generous and pure emotions, anything that approached to the purity and generosity which seemed to me to constitute the chief elements of his character; and yet in the fullness of life and strength the power of his happiness was taken away, and though I *believe* that the sufferings of his life are not worthy to be compared to the glory which has been revealed to him, I was so shocked by the circumstances of his life and death, that no power of reason or faith could ever, or can now, overcome the painful associations connected with both, when I think of him.

. . . From this misery, and all its injurious consequences, you will both be spared. You do now, and you will always more and more, look upon the brief life of your little Posy as an infinite blessing, compared with which mere length of years is absolutely nothing. But, dear William and Kate, I have said nothing to you of that which was beyond all my fondest hopes, and has filled my heart with the devoutest and profoundest gratitude, the proof that all your letters seem to me to afford, that your hearts are right in God's sight, that they were turned reverently and gratefully to him from the first hours of bereavement; that in the intensity of your sorrow you have taken no narrow view of His providence and goodness; that you have not entered the gates of death faithless and desponding, that they may close upon your affections and contract them forever, but rather as the sanctuary of a new life, to be made perfect by suffering. It is, as you have both expressed in many ways, a marvellous revelation, the death of a child, that we can quietly and even thankfully resign the greatest conceivable earthly treasure. It is the first, and probably the only assurance that comes home to us, that we have a treasure laid up in heaven. Why should not the joy be more common, that what we love better than our life is in God's safe keeping? It sometimes makes me quite miserable to think how little knowledge and apprehension we have of another life, how desolate and full of wretchedness this world is without faith in immortality, how that want of faith multiplies and aggravates the sources of misery, and embitters the very fountains of joy through fear, and yet that that teaching which is sufficient to communicate to us all other knowledge, does not help us in the least to the only wisdom that is absolutely indispensable to our comfort and peace of mind. Since it is so, let us bless God that

it springs up instantaneously, in our utmost need, from sealed lips, assuring and convincing us not only that there is another life, but that it is a necessity of God's goodness that there should be.

*Lenox, Nov. 28, 1847.*

MY DEAR BESSIE :

You have thought it strange, perhaps, but I trust you have not been hurt that I have not written to you for the past week. In such a scene as you have recently passed through, it is difficult to see things as they are, to realize the whole truth and avoid exaggeration, and it is just such an occasion as should make one desire to have truth in the inward parts. I do desire it, and I should be glad if I could, without distraction or disturbance, tell you all that I have thought and felt about the life and death of the darling of so many hearts. I have had little time to write, and then have been so much reminded by the silence and sorrowful faces about me of our loss, that I have only occasionally, and for a moment, been able to lift my mind to the elevation which Kate and William seem so soon to have attained. . . . .

Now no death seems terrible to me but that of a person who has planted no good affections in others' hearts, who has sown no good seed in his life.

On the contrary, I believe if anything can do it, death plants the seeds of a better life, and that its ministry is one of benign goodness. I am more confirmed in this faith by the letters you have all written from Boston, than I ever was before, and I cannot think or feel that our dear little Posy is lost to us.

Every person whose death touches me nearly, recalls to my memory those beloved ones who are so numerous in heaven, and occasionally I long to join them. But generally upon every

subject relating to life and death I grow more and more tranquil, more and more convinced that the arrangements of Providence are wise and merciful, more and more desirous to conform to God's will, to live or to die as to His wisdom seems the best. My desire now is stronger to live than it has long been, for I am constantly hoping that my love will be useful to my children as it has never been. . . . .

God has granted me the greatest of blessings, and my prayer is that he would make me worthy of them.

Don't come home till Mr. Minot can come with you.

Your affectionate

FATHER.

To Mrs. K. S. Minot, soon after the death of her oldest child.

*Lenox, Sunday, Dec. 12, 1847.*

. . . . . My thoughts and my heart are much with you and W. You are neither of you long out of my thoughts at any one time, and the mail never comes that I do not desire to be reassured that it is well with you both. The melancholy that I occasionally feel, persuades me how great an effort is required from you both to overcome your painful privation so far as to substitute any new pleasure for the hallowed delight of that dear child, or even to maintain your cheerfulness in the midst of old pleasures which are natural, right and habitual, without any feeling of treason to your first-born. And yet I feel confident that you are both too wise not to consider every stimulus that occupation, society or affection can give to your thoughts and feelings, as God's especial and bountiful provision for the need of your stricken hearts. The power of the senses, perverted and debased as they often are, is a great boon. By what other means, by what spiritual energy could we escape from the narrow circle of our own griefs? how



could our hearts be turned from their buried treasure, if a necessity greater than our wills did not compel us to enter into life and make us partakers of the joys and sorrows of the human family?

To the same.

*Lenox, Feb. 8, 1848.*

MY DEAR KATE:

I have just finished the reading of thirteen or fourteen letters, over and above what my clerk could answer in my absence. Among them, one from the administrator of Dr. F.'s estate, respecting property he has not got, one from J., with a statement of his affairs which require straightening, and one from E., requesting me to get a place for his family in Lenox, and to carry out, as trustee, the provisions of an informal will of his mother which was never proved; some of the letters opening fresh subjects, I fear, of an interminable correspondence. If it should turn out in the last judgment that the life of a *chore boy* is as contemptible as it is profitless, and for the most part pleasureless, I should certainly have a hard time of it, for in regard to the most of my chores, they seem to have no other effect or tendency than to prevent pleasing occupation and profitable employment, to make a man weak in the back and stomach, to turn the eye, set on a universe of light and beauty, upon a few little things in it that look smaller and smaller the longer they are looked at. I wish, to heaven, my friend Frank Shaw could try his experiment of a Phalanx by some compulsory power, and put into it sixteen hundred of his and my poor friends and relations, with the Perkins and Dwight Mills for the necessary capital. It would extricate many from difficulty whose expenses are six hundred dollars a year, and whose

income is only two hundred dollars. It would furnish pleasing occupation to those whose sphere of usefulness is outside of their business, and whose talents are a great deal too big for their pursuits, and it would greatly increase those charming self-delusions by which the people, who can't do anything and don't know anything, are persuaded that they were designed by Heaven as the chief instrument of God's good providence, and it would put an end to some other delusions which are neither pleasing nor profitable; such, for instance, as the painful task of persuading friends that all new promises will certainly be performed, although all old ones have failed, and the strength and means for performance have utterly perished.

I began to give you a reason for not writing to you, and now I would tell you if I could, that my heart, shrivelled and contracted and sapless as it often is, is sometimes turned towards you, and others that are dear to me, and is full of life. I find that my love has been suspended—not dead; it feeds on your's and your sweetness, and the heavens open, and above the trumpery and toils and trials of this tiresome life, I see that the affections which, true and trusted, make our heaven, will be at some time neither wearied nor wasted. I have returned from Boston happier and better for going there. I feel more assured than ever that you and William must be sources of happiness to each other; that you will, as much from principle and desire as from the necessities of life, seize upon and appropriate the pleasures and duties that lie in your way, and that your strength will not fail. This is, after all, the great thing; for the events of life are as mixed as our characters, as changeable as our feelings, and to escape sorrow only means that we must quit life. God keep you both, and your little darling. I felt quietly enough about the child when I was near her, and only

saw every time she went out the smile and bloom that were brought out by the fresh air. *Now* it seems to me inevitable that Elizabeth (the nurse) must tumble from the sidewalk, or that a gust should come suddenly and blow them both over.

I suppose your aunt (Catherine) will be gone when you receive this. If not, give her my love. It was an unspeakable pleasure to me to see her so capable of enjoying the baby, without those painful contrasts and unceasing regrets which I feared. Why can't we be trained to trust in God? Can it be that primers and pictures of little black devils and pitchforks prevent it? Why can't children be made to look at Christ, the Consolator, and hear his sweet voice, "Come unto me," which is a true picture, as well as at Gorgons and Hydras, and all other ugly and impossible things? I hope you will write us in every letter how M. is. To those who are looking out for compensations there is nothing appalling or very sad in her condition; but to me, exhaustion and bodily pain and sleepless nights do not seem much more agreeable, because they are borne with cheerfulness and without repining, nor does it seem exactly to balance the account of suffering, that it brings out the strength and virtue of other people. But I suppose it must be true, as Mrs. M. says, that God could not make the world without evil, and if that is so, it is certainly matter of rejoicing that there should spring from M.'s so much watchful affection and such tender care. I do not think I saw anything that I thought of with more respect than F.'s quiet temper and self-possession. He has had to enter at once, and without experience, into one of the hardest trials of his profession, to deal with a peculiar and extraordinary constitution, with a mysterious disease, and with a person he loves. His feelings are touched, his mind is occupied, his interests and M.'s are at stake. He is often

obliged to take the responsibility of action without consulting an older physician, and yet he is as calm and steady as if his position was fixed, his fortune made and his knowledge infallible. How much of this may be temperament and how much wisdom, I know not; but certainly his temper is most admirable. I feel very grateful to them all for their kindness, more, I think, to Mr. Minot than anybody, for I always feel in relation to him that he has to swallow down a certain amount of disapprobation before his generous and kind nature can have full scope and fair play.

In a letter of later date, occurs the following passage in relation to the sick friend here mentioned.

We are enjoying the gleams of light that are beginning to come again from M.'s room. Light is never so pleasant as when it comes from a friend's sick room, for it throws its beams of hope and health on those who are sorrowing and watching by it.

To Mrs. H. D. Sedgwick.

*December, 1847.*

DEAR JANE:

Yesterday was a memorable day. The news of an actual treaty received and to be submitted, was *confirmed*; news of the death of J. Q. Adams at the time, and in the way and place so fitting that it seemed like a gracious call and ordination of Providence; and I got your letter—as quickly despatched, and as refreshing to the spirit as the break of day in a summer's morning. It is for you, and you only, to show forth in a sentence the beauty of a nature born with the elements of

sweetness, and developed by a quick and intuitive perception of beauty, and years of love and active goodness.<sup>1</sup>

Tell little Fanny to hold up in the German; her head is already too big for her body. Kate, senior, is well and far happier than she expected to be in Boston, and in spite of having her heart wrenched and tortured by the disappointment of Posy's death, sticks to the little baby<sup>2</sup> like a chestnut burr.

Then comes an unmeaning scrawl of his pen, and —

These are my compliments, in German, to Mademoiselle. Get Fanny to read them to her, if you cannot. The roads are still obstructed. I fear I shall never see them again (the Stockbridge families), but my heart still turns that way, and broods over the sweet and sacred valley.

To me.

*Lenox, Feb. 15, 1848.*

DEAR KATE :

Nothing can be more gentle than your rebuke of me for not writing to you; but I had flattered myself that you would be one of two persons, the other being the other Kate, who would not want to be told of my "state of mind," and who would sympathize with my suspension of that eternal scribbling, which through weakness, folly and necessity, takes up so much of my time, that I have got no new ideas since I left Bethlehem, and have forgotten all I learnt there but the art of spelling. Nevertheless it was my intention to write to you last week, but I was constantly busy in my office, and at evening my eyes were not strong, and the flesh was weak.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to our dear friend, Mrs. Dudley Field.

<sup>2</sup> Alice.

To me.

*Lenox Feb. 21, 1848.*

MY DEAR KATE :

I received on Saturday your letter, enclosing one from the dear Castilia. I never read a letter of his without being somewhat sad, for I can never help associating such purity, devotion and tenderness as his, (the like of which I never knew in a man,) with inevitable sorrow. The only comfort is that the sorrow has wonderful compensations in affection, that it cannot last forever, and that it must finally end in a joy which it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive of.

I am sorry, for your sake and Kate's, that you think it necessary to go so soon to New York. She will, of course, miss you, and I am afraid you will pine for that little baby which I perceived was twining round your heart in spite of the disappointment that had torn, and I supposed, somewhat gnarled it. I am glad, however, that it is so, for it is God's goodness that always supplies us with objects to love, and I fear it is the want of it in us, when the bitterness of affliction checks in any degree the active exercise of the only faculty that is capable of indefinite increase, the only one that is a sure solace in all circumstances.

To-day, for the first time this winter, I have set down in my office deliberately to read, and have been taking up the dropped stitches of *Jane Eyre*. What sort of person can the author be? It is charming to see so much sense, goodness and mental power, out of the charmed circle of good society in England; a person, who, with Yankeeisms, Scotchisms, Western sayings and some things occasionally bordering on vulgarity, is yet fit for any society, and may elevate the tone of the best. She is a strange compound of weakness and strength, which makes her natural,

charming, and very admirable. I have read more interesting novels, none that I recollect in which so many good things are said.

To me.

*Lenox, March 5, 1848.*

DEAR KATE:

I received, on Friday night, a letter addressed to *Otis Sedgwick*. On opening it, it appeared in a strange hand-writing which I did not recognize till I caught a glimpse of William's mind, and then it all flashed upon me before I turned over to the signature, and the short but too "triste" note of Mrs. Hooper.<sup>1</sup> She is so exactly fitted for a higher sphere than this, that I am full of melancholy forebodings for those who have enjoyed, and who need, the ministrations of such a spirit as hers. If I had the faith which, so far as I know, is inculcated by all Christians of every sect, that the happiness of a future life is determined in some degree by the spiritual progress we make in this, I should feel, whenever a loving and lovely person leaves the world, as I fancy those must have felt who were left to the swelling flood, when the ark rose above it with the little righteous remnant of God's chosen people. But I do not so believe. Men and women do not often in this world get to be much more than big infants, and it does not seem to me that God will abandon in the next world a soul he has created in this, because it had been unable to discover his goodness and be controlled by it, any more than a mother should abandon her child before it learns to recognize her ceaseless love, or even after, when it closes its mouth, shuts its teeth and violently kicks against the ugly tasting medicine or the ugly discipline

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Ellen Hooper.

she is obliged to inflict. The child, when it *first beholds the mother*, turns to her with instinctive affection; and so shall we to God, when we behold Him and see Him as He is. But the seed cannot be quickened unless it die.

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, May 2, 1848.*

After an absence of a fortnight at the vernal season, with some things neglected, and many more pressing to be done, the ploughing, planting, sowing, the cleaning inside and outside, and the usual swarm of painters, carpenters and masons, that invariably rush in to fill the vacuum created by the departure of the school, and that must in some respects be controlled, I have had enough to engage my attention and to occupy it, without writing any letters except to import more Irish, to provide for recent importations, or to answer the demands of my office. Otherwise, my darling, I should not have suffered your sweet letters, which were better than anything else but your aunt's journey, to remain so long unanswered. But you are enough like the Giver of all good things, to furnish food and be satisfied with the strength it gives, without expecting thanks, or barely a recognition of where it comes from.

I do, however, think of you daily, and I am never so tired, weary, depressed or *dissatisfied*, that the thought of you does not bring me to my right mind, and make me feel that your life and love are a compensation infinitely beyond my deserts, beyond any distresses that I feel or fear. I cannot tell you how much satisfaction it gives me, to find in every one of your letters such mention of little Posy. The way you continually connect yourself and William with that child, seems to me an



unequivocal and indubitable evidence of a true love and a pure faith; holding on to the ineffable gifts of God as an indestructible treasure, and appreciating it worthily and gratefully as something far too good to be created for the use of this world alone, as something bringing the next world nearer and making it necessary.

Pray tell me if there is not something in your increasing experience of life, and its relations and affections, that leads you to read the Scriptures with more interest and more care; and do you not, in reading them, take more pleasure, and find extraordinary power and meaning in passages which you have read over and over again without heeding them? During the reign of the senses in the first periods of youth, the Scriptures produce little impression; we are filled with life, and the thought of another is connected with a sense of loss, privation, misery, and we turn away from it, and the common interpretation of the Scriptures gives prominence to unintelligible dogmas and mysteries, and we imbibe superstitious fears founded on the precepts of men. As we grow older we grow wiser, and find that many things which propped us up have tumbled down, and that everything human that we lean upon may fail us, and, from a sort of necessity of nature, we turn to that revelation which every day's experience seems to make a more sure word of prophecy. What a melancholy thing it is that the Bible should be put into the hands of children as a doom and not a boon. I am sometimes almost tempted to wish that there were no other book.

Speaking of his daughter Bessie, who had been suffering for some time with disease of the eyes, he says:

What she wants for a while is perfect freedom and relaxation; at least, so it seems to me, but I do not understand the

ways of Providence, do not distrust them as I did, and do not, except when I am under the pressure of some imbecile fear, much care to have them altered in relation to my children, their size, form, height, color, complexion, or condition. I have often wished Grace was a hair taller, Willie a little more imaginative, and as for Bess, I have grieved in secret about her eyes, and all the time she has been growing stronger, more active and enduring, and sweeter every day. So you see I don't mean to fret, except when I have eaten figs and onions and got a heartburn, or some other such cursed folly takes the soul out of me. . . . I had a letter from your mother to-night. She had just come from sight-seeing, and last of all, from the Dead Letter Office, where ten clerks were consigning to destruction about seven thousand letters a day. Your mother was shocked and distressed to think of so much love and advice lost, so many hopes disappointed, etc., such infinite treasures of love wasted, that might have strengthened and edified so many longing souls. I do not take this irreligious view of God's good providence over such a quantity of illegible, incomprehensible, nonsensical manuscript, but rather consider it a blessing that He should determine the only practicable way of making an illumination out of it—by a bonfire. Good Heavens! only think of more than two millions of letters every year that nobody has to pay the postage of, read if they can, file away and answer!

To his wife.

*May 3, 1848.*

I am surprised, dear Lizzie, that a person of your wise and generous mind should take such a contracted view of God's good providence as to indulge in a strain of unbroken lamentation over the bonfire of dead letters. Of the two million

letters that made that *bonfire* (a word most happily chosen), there were, probably, thousands that were duuning letters, thousands more containing promises made only to be broken, quack advertisements and sham notices, thousands and thousands with bad grammar, bad spelling, and nonsense worse than the spelling or grammar, thousands more, impossible to read and not worth reading, and probably about as many with love as with money in them. These are undoubtedly a loss, but only think, — and let your benevolence rejoice in the thought, — of the postages saved, the time saved in reading and filing and answering these letters. O, how I should like to see a bonfire of two million of letters. It is worth a journey to Washington to a person whose philosophical temper is undisturbed by a wild imagination. . . . .

If Will is not well and strong, I pray you not to let him study. I shall not consent to let him go to college unless he is perfectly fitted and perfectly well. Much will depend on his going there without the least disability of any kind, or any misgiving as to his power to keep his standing in his class — no Sedgwick can content himself if he is not on a par with his associates. I wish you would give my love to him and Gracie, and tell Gracie that several of her cousins have grown tall after they were sixteen or seventeen years of age, and that if she does not it's no matter; her mind will be big enough and her heart will give it such a direction that she and her friends may well be satisfied with the stature that pleases God.

To William Minot, Jr.

*Lenox, Sept. 17, 1848.*

. . . . . I am very sorry to hear that you have been out of sorts since you left us. I know not from Kate's letters, how much, or from what cause, but I infer it is

from that infernal complaint, "*non nominandum inter Christianos*," which does not permit even an allusion to one's bowels, because they cease to represent compassion, mercies, or any other goodness, Christian or human. The baby, too, has got cross, that divine little thing, of whom it seems sacrilege to use a disparaging word; and Kate has been worried somewhat with care, and so much with fear as to break in upon her sweet sleep. I wish none of these things had happened; that all your days might be filled with activity, and all your nights with repose; that the smallest of all good jokes might fill your house with a merry peal of laughter, and the smallest of all good deeds be performed with a hearty good will, and as satisfactory to you as the discovery of a new star. But, alas! so long as in the mysterious providence of God, the best human society cannot exist without doctors, and pills are as necessary as the Gospel, what can one do in this earthly tabernacle but make the best of it, until it is dissolved, *sink* it, as much as possible, like a common sewer, with acts of grace and goodness, and look *up* as steadily as if there were nothing to be seen but the heaven above us. . . . My sister, (Catherine) looks well in bodily health, but I think her mind is somewhat impaired; she keeps a biscuit to nibble on, which Alice blessed, as she came away, with a kiss!

To me.

1848.

DEAR KATE:

I received your letter on Friday, but Friday and Saturday were devoted to the Barrington dentist, and if you can imagine how a man feels, not with a foot swelling under a tight boot pressing on his instep, but with some strange thing worse

than a toad, filling up his mouth, and pressing upon every part of it so as to confine all his thoughts to one subject, and prevent all utterance even in regard to that, you will excuse me for not immediately answering your questions. There is one good thing about dentistry. It lessens the pressure of outward afflictions, and gives one a pleasing sense of a sacrifice in behalf of one's friends.

I have just come from church. We had a funeral sermon for Marcus Bassett who lived by the pond. You may recollect him from his physiognomy, which had the peculiarity of but two features, his eyes and his nose, which latter member absorbed both his forehead and his chin. His character was somewhat after the order of Ozial, Hastings; the same in calibre, but without the variety which Ozial's has acquired from his more public station as nurse and house-painter, and one of Wilson's choir of singers. Marcus never came to the village except on Sunday, or to bring six eggs. Mr. ——— was somewhat stultified, but luckily he forgot Marcus entirely after he said his prayers, and preached an imaginative discourse about the future state.

To me.

*February 19, 1849.*

MY DEAR KATE:

There was a passage in your last letter respecting Mr. Furness, that fixed my attention a good deal, for it is precisely a matter I have thought of often, with deep anxiety, respecting my children, and that is the formation of religious character, a thing which I desire so much for them that if I were well persuaded they had it, I should be free from all anxiety respecting them. Indeed, I see nothing to covet, nothing greatly to

desire, but an *ever-present* faith in God as the Universal Father, and a purpose to do his will; for that gives one courage in action, and patience under suffering, the best means of avoiding evil, and the certainty of enduring it when it comes. But how is this to be brought about? There is the eternal puzzle, not by any twaddle about "spontaneous worship." I am sure we know what that was before Christ came; neither is it, I fancy, by catechisms, or speaking through the nose, or by formal prayers.

I believe prayer is *indispensable* to the soul's welfare, and that no person who has any belief in the future, can have any rational happiness without it; and I would rather know that my children daily entered into their closet and shut the door, than to know anything else respecting them. But of all thoughts, none would be more melancholy to me than the mockery of external, formal worship, that species of enlightened Paganism which springs from the old superstitions; and while observing rational Christian forms, treats the Deity as an enemy to be appeased, as some omnipotent King James the second, whose Lord Jeffries was to judge them some day, not according to any law of righteousness, or inward merit or demerit of their own, but according to some standard of reverence and subserviency to absolute power.

I do not know any spectacle more touching or more admirable than that of a family, old and young, uniting with one accord in a reverent expression of filial love; but how seldom is it that the sweet, pure, innocent, good life of the parent can enable him to ask his children to join him in such worship! I repeat, what can he do but pray alone, and wait till the providence of God shall teach them that He is the only source of goodness, of hope, and of consolation.

To me.

March, 1849.

I hasten to correct an impression that I fear I gave you, that he (Mr. Neill) was attempting to get up an orthodox revival, a thing that I have an especial aversion to, for so far as I have observed it, speaking not after the manner of men, but truly and soberly, the doctrine of "Christ and him *crucified*" has been most earnestly preached by those persons who could by no means be persuaded under favorable circumstances to make a very small sacrifice (pecuniary) for a dear friend, without going away more sorrowful than the young man of great professions, who was asked to give up all at once, and because he felt bad at the idea of such a reverse, and of being dependent on mean, human beings, and did not see how that was to be helped by loving or trusting the Saviour, has been consigned to the ill place by true believers who think they honor Christ by putting on to the words "went away" "straight into hell fire, and there has been and will be to all eternity." Mr. Neill, on the contrary, has preached well to his people; he makes *generosity*, *disinterestedness* and *charity*, the starting point for the Christian faith, and so long as he does that, he may hold nineteen meetings a week instead of nine. But there will come divisions among them, and Mr. N. will be looked upon as setting up a false Christ.

Wednesday P. M., March 21, 1849.

DEAREST BESSIE :

Farley is shut up, everybody has cleared out of the office, the journey to Pittsfield and back is one of five hours, exclusive of stops, and I think, therefore, I can write you a short letter without interruption, and it is the first chance of the

kind I have had since you went away. How long you have been absent, and how few words have been exchanged between us! and yet, dear Bess, I think the fountain of my love is as fresh and sweet, as if you had come hither every day to draw. I believe you have had many pleasures in Boston. I rejoice in every one of them, most of all in that you have been so long by the sunny side of Kate, which starts the sap of every sweet affection and keeps it running all the time. On the whole, this will be a memorable visit of yours, so much to enjoy now and hereafter, and so little to regret, to say nothing of the rare opportunity of seeing so much of Fanny,<sup>1</sup> and knowing and feeling all the time that to be near her as one of her friends, is something better than the world's homage, and not likely to be spoiled by it. I understand that you intend to return here with her, about April 2d. Well, I am content that it should be so, though I should have been glad to have the grass greener and the mud dried before your return, for I cannot bear the thought of your *making an effort* to content yourself when you first get home . . . . . We are just now a good deal troubled about Sara Bishop.

He gives some details of a serious illness from which Miss Bishop was suffering, and then goes on as follows;

One circumstance like this produces a great change in the village, and disturbs the quiet order of things amazingly. In the clerk's office, it is something like an eclipse of the sun at noonday. Bishop, instead of being in my office a dozen times a day, talking sense or nonsense, either of which is charming, absents himself totally, and I see no more of him than of the dead, or if I chance to, it is another person. . . . .

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Kemble.



Mrs. Parker can't read because it hurts her eyes, and Miss Chloe can't sew because it hurts her back. The poor girl is conscious that she is about quitting the world, and sent for me the other day, to see if I could recover some property that she parted with two years ago. I never have such a sense of the value of property, and the Christian duty of taking care of it, and using it wisely, as when I see the relief that is sometimes afforded by the smallest sum, and the bitter misery that sometimes comes from improvidence. But then again, if all had enough, we should be as hard as the nether millstone, and if none wasted, what would become of those Christian graces which, to some extent, are as necessary to the comfort of life as clean linen. I was, on the whole, sorry that I could not make a short visit to Boston just at this time, for I am very desirous of knowing something more than I do know of what Willie is about, and how he fares and how he stands. Are you not sometimes startled to think how much may be going on in the minds of those dearest to us, of which we know nothing. I intended, or rather wished, to write to your aunt to-day, but since I began this letter the interlopers have come in, and if I get through this, and direct it to the right person, it is all I expect. I wish you would tell your aunt that she need not take the burden of my health on her shoulders. It is very good, and I have nothing fatiguing to do; only just chores enough to prevent my doing anything of any importance, unless by the way, and as I am inclined to think, there is nothing of much more importance than to have one's chores done in season, and done well.

To William Minot, Jr., after the birth of his oldest son.

*Lenox, May 13, 1849.*

Thank you for your letter, dear William. It is one of the best specimens of intuition and logic, and one of the best proofs of the superiority of one to the other, that I have ever seen. Your pæans on the birth of the boy are natural and right, sanctioned by the prophets and apostles, and would be approved of all men, for there is joy everywhere, especially where there is such breadth and multiplication of petticoats as are on your plantation, that a man child is born into the world, and this in spite of the colics, cholera and colleges he may have to go through; in spite of measles, mobs, murders, and the whole medical faculty; in spite of all the chances of sin and sickness, and therefore it is pleasing that you open your heart to the present joy, and let it fill up before any fear of prospective evil can enter it. Besides, the joy is entire and may be perpetual; it is fulfilled at birth; the sorrow is prospective, doubtful, transitory. . . . I have had congratulations without number on my increased wealth, honor and prosperity, and for some reason or other, I know not what, I have been made particularly happy that you have got this cold spring in your shady pines—a little *son and heir*. God bless him! . . . Immediately upon hearing the news, I dressed up, put on a new pair of trowsers, a new poplin vest, and a shirt fit for a bridegroom, and walked with considerable dignity past my office, looking round every now and then to see if any person wished to speak to me. I have dressed every day since; in fact I feel all over like a gentleman. So much for the boy. Don't let three days go by without a memorandum about him.

To the same.

1849.

. . . . . It is perhaps only when our contemporaries leave us, and leave us nearly alone, that we comprehend the full spiritual meaning of such a child as little Alice, pouring her young life into us, and keeping the springs of affection full, which would otherwise dry up. By the way, that little Alice is a brave thing, according to Bessy's account, and if there is no fly running about on the window, walks about the room with all possible security. That's nice—a fly is dangerous—nobody can tell where it may light; it may be on the optic nerve.

To our beloved kinsman, Charles B. Sedgwick, of Syracuse, he writes soon after his marriage in 1849.

. . . . . Has my new cousin got wonted to her new home? What an extraordinary provision of nature it is that a young thing should be planted, nourished with tears, grow up surrounded with friends, take deep root and flourish, and then suddenly, even in summer, be transplanted into a strange soil, and not only not wilt, but flourish with a new bloom! So may it be, and God be praised!

To me, when I had just procured a set of artificial teeth.

June, 1849.

. . . . . I have been painfully aware of the torment you have gone through with, and I partake of the triumph you have achieved, not so much from the power of mechanism, as from the fortitude and bravery with which you endured society. But that is owing to your natural, confessed,

*felt* superiority. *I* could not do it. I left my three principal teeth up stairs the other day, and came to breakfast, and internally swore like Jackson that they might stay there, and that I would go without them, and felt nearly as big as he did when he removed the deposits, I was so swelled out with the momentary power of my own will. But I sat down to breakfast, nobody present but Bess and Grace. They looked at me, looked at each other and sighed, they could not help it, my countenance fell, my heart sunk within me, and now, if I should go to California, to the woods, or hang myself, nobody but you would know the cause, unless the coroner's inquest looks into my mouth.

To his wife.

*Boston, July 29, 1849.*

. . . . . Father Matthew is in town to-day, and all Boston, with the exception of a few persons who hate crowds and avoid all vulgarity, is in the streets. I have been quietly writing to you, not so much from sympathy with the elect, as because I expected to gratify my curiosity by looking out at the procession from the office window; but he has passed by without passing through this street. I shall probably see him on the Common, and the immense multitude which no man can number, for it is an interesting thing to witness the homage to a man of supposed greatness and virtue, or anything else in the multitude that moves them from a spontaneous feeling. I wish I respected Father Matthew more, but I so much hate the lie that he helps to propagate, and see so little good in the total abstinence principle, which has induced five millions to take the pledge without diminishing by one gallon the sale of spirits, that I cannot bear to see our people turning out as to some

great benefactor whose life and example are sowing the seeds of a pure life. The temperance banners look to me like so many screens to hide the glasses that those who carry them are putting to their lips.

To me.

1849.

. . . . . Many thanks to you for your account of Miss Frederika (Bremer) and Father Taylor. I had just refreshed my memory of Jacob, his ancestors and posterity, by reading it to Bessie, and resolved the punishment of his nation, their dispersion and persecution in all lands and through all time, into a just judgment of Heaven for their intolerable conceit in supposing themselves the favorite and chosen people. I wish there were more Father Taylors, men honest enough to speak their minds, and then it would not be considered the duty of all pious believers to swear to that particular part of the Bible which contradicts every man's instinct of the Supreme Ruler, the Infinite Dispenser of mercy and justice.

To his wife.

*Woodbourne, summer of 1849.*

. . . . . I have thought a thousand times that if the afflictions of my life had been more severe, they would have been less injurious, and that if I could have seen things exactly as they are, and comprehended their whole bearing, I might have been as *good* as I am *sometimes* profoundly grateful for my lot, which comprises so many elements of happiness, and at the foundation of which lies your character, temper and affection.

To me.

1849.

Ward's departure, speaking after the manner of men, is an evil. He was a gentleman; the only one I know in the county or State, linked with a class of men who had profited, or were like to profit by his sympathy, his knowledge, his taste, and his most sweet manners; and then he was a friend so sensible, so delicate, so wise and generous, that I cannot help feeling sad at his departure, as well for the loss to civilization and agriculture, as to myself; but for myself I do not fully apprehend, nor shall I ever, the loss of his society. Our losses, when they include a friend, are immeasurable.

Mrs. Haggerty is here, as pretty and as bright and animated as ever, and perfectly willing to give me a glass of milk punch every night.

If you see ——— tell him his wife keeps up and is in capital spirits. I have known several cases where children gained immensely by the loss of their parents, but I never knew one where a mother gained so much by the loss of her children!

To me.

*Lenox, Jan. 15, 1850.*

How could you blow up Cousin Tom in such a corrupting way? I shall be obliged to tell him some time, that four of my girls shut themselves up the night you went away, and spent the evening in tears (so I am told), and that in your first letter from New York you did not even allude to them. Such is the fate of idolaters. I have reserved to the last a reply to your sarcastic allusion to me and the intellectual game.<sup>1</sup> The game is wonderful for consolation, and for testing the powers of the

<sup>1</sup> The game of *solitaire* with cards.

immortal mind; absorbed as I have been by it, and all sufficient as I have found it in my worst hours of solitude, at the stroke of eleven, in the midst of delighted expectation of the next turn of the cards, I throw them all up in an instant, as if they were baubles. Think of that and be admonished!

To me.

*Lenox, March 2, 1850.*

. . . . . As to myself, dear Kate, I am sorry either in act or omission to cause you a pang, and I never have designedly, and I will not hereafter, if you will please tell me under precisely what circumstances to send you a daily bulletin. Shall it be when I have not taken meat for breakfast? when I have taken tea instead of coffee? a glass of beer instead of a glass of wine? or when I have omitted both, or have taken a slight cold, or have a headache? I think it is about five years since I have called a physician, or had occasion to. I had a cold which from extreme prudence confined me two days to the house, but I have been ever since at Court, and *for aught I know*, I am in good condition.

To me.

1850.

DEAR KATE:

I did not half finish my letter to you. I wished particularly to tell you of a remarkable recovery which I wish you to communicate to Dr. V. It throws some light perhaps upon homœopathy, but it beats it. That is a beautiful system. I take it to be no less than faith in an omnipotent Providence. First imbibed by the practitioner, shown by his

eye, countenance, and conversation to the longing and anxious patient; presented in pellets, which are the almost invisible symbols communicated to the mind by some moral power known only to believers, and then perhaps by some nervous action, equally inexplicable, determining the will to recover, and be well. End of the preamble. A.'s case as reported to me by his son, as accurate a person as Maria Sedgwick.

Mr. A. has long been diseased. Some weeks ago he had a violent illness which, from week to week, proceeded from bad to worse, till he exhibited every symptom of speedy dissolution, and was given over by his whole council of doctors, including Flint, who said that his recovery was impossible, and that his death would take place very soon. A few days before this opinion was pronounced, his son made his will. At that time A. told his son that if he was likely to die, he must be apprised of it, for he had some communications to make to him of great importance. He was exhausted, however, by the effort of making his will, and it was deferred. Immediately after, he was taken delirious, and continued in that state for two days, when he fell into a lethargy — a state of perfect prostration and insensibility. It was said that he could not live through the night. His son felt extremely solicitous to rouse him, and spoke to his mother of what had passed between them—his father's injunction and his promise. They both said it would be an idle mockery, but young A. determined to make the effort. He tried to rouse his father by shaking and speaking to him, but without effect. He then spoke to him in a loud and peremptory tone, and told him he must hear. The father opened his eyes, recognized his son, raised himself up in the bed, called for some papers and memoranda, and told where they were, called for paper and pencil, wrote half a page, referred to several



places in the papers, to connect and supply his imperfect minutes, made calculations which would at any time have required a considerable effort of mind, finished his communication, and sunk back upon his pillow. In five minutes he burst into a profuse perspiration, and from that moment began to recover.

To Charles B. Sedgwick.

*Lenox, April 17, 1850.*

. . . . . I do not recollect ever to have been more disappointed than by the conduct of Daniel Webster.<sup>1</sup> I had no confidence in the loftiness of his mind, but I had a good deal in his moral perceptions and in his pride. The free democracy must enlarge their creed, and vote for no man who can't and don't live upon his own honest earnings. How clearly necessary it seems to have a final judgment and an omniscient judge. The other Webster, under the spur of an exasperating debt and the pressure of torment and resentment, in a moment of temptation, put out of the way a person who ought in all decency to have died a voluntary death, and he goes to the gallows with infamy; and our Webster, trained up in the faith of the Puritans, pursuing with honor among honorable men all his life the most honorable profession, lauded for the loftiness of his sentiments in spite of the lowness of his life, fortified by the continual utterance of such sentiments and the respect of mankind, acts like hell, and inflicts a wound on the honor of the country which a generation of righteous men cannot repair. But he talks big to the end, and his eight hundred Boston judges certify to his conduct as the most excellent of his life.

<sup>1</sup> In relation to the Fugitive Slave law.

To me, when our niece, Maria Sedgwick, had been injured by a severe fall.

1850.

. . . . . I had a quite remarkable note from sister Susan, respecting Maria before she got rid of her spasms, or the pain had much diminished; remarkable, as showing how little power there was in fear and anxiety, where anxiety was fairly awakened, and the possible evil in store the greatest that could be thought of, to disturb her excellent judgment, to shut out that blessed comforter, hope, to unsettle the steadiness of her most upright and religious mind. . . . , . Every time I get from you a sketch of character, I am thankful that your family affections are strong even to weakness. That of —— is the last to awaken this feeling. How kind it is in Providence to sprinkle grains of self-satisfaction so profusely in such a character. If —— were humble, he would be no more amiable than he is, but then he would cut his throat, or lead a miserable life. Now he is a happy man, and really does not need even the considerate kindness of Mrs. —— to make him so.

In May, 1850, my brother moved his house from the corner where the Methodist church now stands in Lenox, to its present position. Continual rainy weather for five or six weeks caused almost interminable delays and disappointments. He was obliged to hire a small house for the summer, in which not only his own family, but Mrs. Sedgwick's pupils had to be stowed. He made merry over his trials, but the anxiety, worry, and discomfort of every sort, brought on an illness which prostrated him for nearly a year, and from the effects of which he never wholly recovered.

To his daughter Bessie.

*Lenox, May, 1860.*

DEAR BELLE:

The house was walking off like a strong horse with a fast gait, at half past four, yesterday, when one sill gave out, *and it busted up, and one side of the kitchen fell out.* Every calamity has its consolation, and as you, heaven bless you, have taught me, I always—sometimes—look at the latter chiefly. What I am thinking of is that the people who come now will bring their provisions or do their own cooking. . . . . When I came from Court, Kitty told me a lady had been to inquire for lodgings (of me I suppose, because my location is so convenient to all the railroads and stage routes). The front door being six feet high and no steps, she was foiled that time. I am going after her as soon as I have done this. The dining-room is turned into a kitchen, and it is so pleasant I shall keep it for that purpose. I desire no change. If you, and your mother, and aunt C., the persons I love best, excepting my other children and other relations, will keep away till after Court, I shall be happy. I have kept the covenant we made at parting as sacred as if it had been transmitted from the ark solely for your use and mine. Whether because it is a covenant, or a covenant with you, or because good spirits are an inheritance which I can't throw off, I don't know, but I feel fine, and I wish you would stay for a few days in the gracious state where Providence has placed you. I sent Oliver for a sill yesterday. It was got, is going in, and we start on our journey, probably, at 1.10 P. M. Mr. Thompson spent the evening with me. He brings up the wood-house to six hundred dollars, but I don't care. I've fixed it all out. If Tubbs wants his pay he can take the house, and if Thompson ain't suited he may take back the

wood-house. I don't think money is indispensable. That is a delusion. All one wants and must have is spirits; those I have got, and I am, darling, and ever shall be

Yours affectionately, C. S.

Give my love to aunt Jane and Rie, and send me word you won't come back to-day.

To me.

May 23, 1850.

DEAR KATE :

It was past eight when I got out of Court last night. Fanny had walked up to take me down to tea. I staid all night, and when I got up, it was too late to send you a bulletin to-day. Yesterday morning my sill was put in. In the afternoon my house walked off, and to-day would have been at Walker's corner, but for the rain which has set in again, and during which everything is stationary, and the hands bite their lips. . . . .

*Friday.*

It rained all night, and will infallibly rain to-day. We are stuck in the mud, and are like to be for some time. Every carriage that passes, light or loaded, and it seems this week that they are multiplied by ten, is driven into the ditch in a narrow pass; some get stuck, and some unload; all are in danger of upsetting. But up to this time the people are marvellously good-natured, and I have not heard a word of reproach or complaint. They are probably wise and pious souls, who have truth in the inward parts and are wise enough to keep it there; clearly foreseeing that if it were let out, it might lead to battle, murder and sudden death.

To me.

*Lenox, June 3, 1850. Monday Evening, 8 P. M.*

DEAR KATE:

I have taken up about the thirtieth new position for the last thirty days, and am now writing from G. W——'s parlor, which is long enough for a Lansdowne drawing-room, but probably unlike it in its figure and fixings, being full of jogs, about nine feet wide, and with a fire-place so made that whenever the kitchen door opens, it makes a fire-screen and a fire-board. Another thing makes me feel queer, and that is, that there is an unusual quantity of ink and paper on the table, and my wife is not sitting at it, and *not* writing a letter. I have your letter of Sunday. I knew I had been brutal to you—what else could have turned my stomach and sent my heart down, knee deep, into a standing pool of black bile, and kept it there as much shut out from human affections as in a pirate's breast? and yet, I *assure* you, that in the worst of times—when the ropes broke oftenest, when the cry came oftenest and loudest for more timbers, and heavier timbers,—whether advancing prosperously, and warmed with some unexpected success, or drenched and cooled with rain, and stuck fast in the mud, I have always desired that you should be informed of the house's "melancholy journey and slow"—more melancholy and slow than that of our first parents, for it had no place to choose, nor Providence to guide, but Tubbs and his legion of evil spirits, who tore the poor thing from its foundations, and would have torn it joint from joint, rather than give it place or repose till they had had their will of it. On Wednesday there was an expectation that the poor thing would find its resting place the next day. Bessy said she would write you. I went to a Reference, got cold, and a disordered stomach. Good heavens!

that that should be spoken of as other events, and calamities are spoken of, with no more preface, precaution, solemnity of language or feeling, than one speaks of the loss of fortune, friends, or character! Well, I came home; the house had not budged; Tubbs was tired out; his courage was soaked out—he was *sick*. The house for once had not changed front; with me *desire* had failed. I did not get drunk, but went down to Mrs. Kemble's, and being willing she should have the satisfaction of feeling that I made myself at home there, went to bed, and there I staid two days and nights without eating or drinking anything but soluble mercury and epicac. Now, dear Kate, are you appeased? I hope so, for I love you again as well as ever. I know you deserve more than I can give to anybody and I desire that you should love me, but wait for everything to come right, till I can go to bed without having to box the compass, as I did for a month, without knowing for *one* of fifteen nights which point of it I was boxing, for every time I went to bed my house had changed front. It stood in the highway, it reeled all day, and was very drunk all night; the doors were all open, the foundation gone; it was like a condemned criminal between heaven and earth, unworthy of either, and every time I heard travellers on horse-back or in *earriages*, (and the devil seems to have beset all travellers to go by night) it seemed to me that I was charged by the chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen, like some cursed first-born in a strange land, and by no means hid in any bulrushes.

To me.

June 4, 1850.

DEAR KATE:

On Friday morning the house was prepared for its final descent; a cable strong as a seventy-four's was fixed behind, and into this breeching, Tubbs tackled himself. I had

abandoned it to its fate, very doubtful of its result, and somewhat indifferent to it. It seemed prepared for a plunge down the hill into the cellar which was not stoned up, and most likely to go there head first. It proceeded safely till it got within twelve feet of the brink—the cable **SNAPPED!** “By God!” said Tubbs “she’s gone to hell!” “Throw under—throw under!” All hands fled in consternation but two; Parker and one other man threw stones and blocks before the rollers. The stones were ground to powder, the blocks ironed out like wet sheets, Parker in peril of life; but within two feet of the bank she was finally, almost miraculously, *stopped*, and Saturday afternoon was *safely* lodged, and is now levelled on the prettiest spot, where she is to stand. Last night I slept soundly, and as soon as I finish this I shall eat up the rest of your oranges. How sweet they are! what are they?

If I had time I would give you some account of my visit to Fanny. One satisfaction we gave her, that, of making ourselves at *home*; two of her rooms were devoted to sickness, and on Monday morning I felt that Channing was right, that life *is good*. It needs but a few hours of its best quality to compensate for *any sufferings* that are passed and over. Nothing could exceed her kindness from the first in every way, and then her conversation is so rich and charming.

Woodbourne, July, 1850.

DEAR BESSIE :

I saw no other way in which I could adequately return your love, than by declining my piece of mince pie, which I did yesterday. Having a little cold, I was as much afraid of it as of the acids at the Medical College which dissolved a whole man in four hours. What a capital idea that was of Jane’s; the

tea caddy, or whatever it was. It tickles me to death, and I put it along side of her sympathy with the Hungarians; for one or both, she will be canonized by nations or her friends. Tell your mother that after I wrote to her, I took a walk with Kate, and on my return, met Alice and "Boy Brudder." Alice looked as rosy as the boy, and so bright and jolly, and so comical with her white and red leggins, that I wanted to meet you both, and wanted her to stay for the remainder of my solitary night.

Whenever I take Boy Brudder in my arms, he seizes me by the hair of the head. Whether he is envious of the few hairs remaining (he having none) I know not, or whether he is prophetic since the Parkman murder, and will not that my gray hairs be brought with sorrow to the grave. He has left but few.

. . . . .  
Good-bye. Your affectionate FATHER.

To his wife.

*Boston, July 24, 1850.*

. . . . . You must have been disgusted at my making no mention in my letter of Alice and Willie.<sup>1</sup> I do not see in either of them any of those painful premonitions of precocity which sometimes absorb the reflections of anxious mothers, but they have plenty of wit, and by no means such an indifference to circumstances as to require at every succeeding moment a panegyric upon the sweetness of their tempers. They are nice children, both of them sweet and affectionate, and the boy is very observing and pretty. I spent about three hours with him yesterday, mostly in the woods and on the grass, and if I were to write a treatise on the management of children, I should confine it to the one topic of letting them alone. The

<sup>1</sup> His grand-children, aged respectively three years and one year.



happiness that that little fellow had yesterday in picking up dirt and scattering it on his frock, (which I suppose was merely to stimulate curiosity to discover some labor-saving process of washing,) in taking off my hat and throwing it on the ground, in crawling off the papers I had spread on the ground for him, and tickling Vigo's nose with a straw, was worthy of a long chapter on infant psychology. What a terrible pity it is that so many anxious hours and wearisome labors of parents should be spent in guarding children against the exercise of their faculties, and finally exposing them to accidents for want of their use; in other words, to weaken them in body and mind. I mean no reflection whatever upon my little Kate, for upon my honor and conscience, I do not believe she is one half so weak as most affectionate mothers.

To his daughter Kate on her birthday.

*Lenox, Sept. 15, 1850.*

. . . . , . . . , I am overlooking the meadow and the hills as I write, and endeavoring to lift up my heart in devout thanksgiving that our lines have fallen in pleasant places, and that so much of our life has been crowned with loving kindness and tender mercy. We hail this sweet air and beautiful light as auspicious on your birthday. Your aunt gave a slight shrug, as she spoke of your thirty years, at the breakfast table. The same thing might have happened to me and in both be pardoned as an instinct in those who are twice as old, but I am happy to say that no involuntary or useless regrets or forebodings for a moment cast a shadow before my vision, or prevented my looking back with satisfaction, joy and thanksgiving upon the sweetness and richness of your life in all that

can inspire affection and reward it, and especially at your lot in life, with a husband whom experience has taught us to respect and love and confide in more and more, until in our fond partiality we desire no better; and with children to dignify life and fill it with the best and purest hopes. I cannot help desiring for you a greater measure of bodily strength, but I am so persuaded that you will use wisely what you have, that I am quite, or nearly quite, content on that score, and only desire that in our mixed condition of good and evil, we may not fail to appreciate the good that so much predominates and be thankful for it. I am fully convinced that without sorrow and suffering, life would lose half its dignity and much of its purity, and if this be so, we ought to lose none of our fortitude or patience, in the weak habit of magnifying that which falls to our share as something peculiar and too hard to be borne. As my own life shortens, the world seems to me more and more full of beauty, and it is only in some short paroxysm of bodily pain, most transient and infrequent, or when I am haunted by the feeling of a useless life, or have a superstition that I have had all my good things, or when I happen to see the well-springs of happiness gushing out everywhere and poisoned by some cursed sin or folly, or feel as everybody feels some sad privation, that I am wholly insensible to it.

To his wife.

*Saratoga, September, 1850.*

. . . . . Catherine's devotion to me has been incessant, and if it had been a little less watchful I should have appreciated it as I shall at some time when my mind is out of its present tabernacle, and I have dwelt upon the love of those dear to me with wonder, with humility, and

God forgive me if not with gratitude. I can never be in any degree as grateful as I ought to be for such friends, for you and for my children; how good they are! what comfort they give! what confidence, what hopes they inspire! I hope little Gracie will not get morbid about herself. If I had twenty such children as she and Bess and Kate, I would, if I could, give worship for them on all instruments, and with every power that utters praise. I am glad you enjoy our new home so much. Let us try to sanctify it by every service and affection that the heart can give utterance to.

To me.

*Jan. 22, 1851.*

MY DEAR KATE:

No letters to-night. I was summoned from the office to-day to see Doctor Chapman, who came, I believe, upon some request of my anxious family probably sent to him in Virginia in September last. After careful examination and inquiries, he assured my wife and daughters there was no danger of immediate dissolution, and indeed that he entertained considerable hope of my final recovery. This however, (I fancy), in his judgment depends mainly upon my obtaining some oatmeal within a month or two of this time. He says that the liver is extremely sensitive to any alteration of mental feeling; that ordinarily a man of a well-balanced character, will be so cheerful on buckwheat cakes, that enough of them, well-raised and baked, will answer all the purposes of exercise, society and prosperity in business, in producing health; *but*, that when one's domestic affections are strong, and the sensibility in any degree acute, if there be a disagreement between the patient and his friends, in relation to diet, it will so derange his nerves, and con-

sequently obstruct the bilious secretions, that buckwheat is not an absolute specific without some admixture of *oatmeal*. Will you, therefore, please to bring me a dozen or twenty-five pounds.

To William Minot, Jr.

*Lenox, Feb. 14, 1851.*

MY DEAR WILLIAM:

I have not a very clear idea of the sin or punishment of Father Adam, but my conjecture is, that the garden of Eden was among the rolling prairies of the Mississippi, and that every variety of fine fruit flourished in the muck there; that his wife was a woman of extreme beauty, but too curious and fond of power, and that under these circumstances, without any external constraint, he yielded to his appetites till he was fairly ashamed, and hid himself, and that he never would have recovered, and his posterity would never have been heard of, if he had not been turned out of that palling paradise onto the Rocky Mountains, where he was obliged one half the time to spit in his hands and hold on, and the other half to work like the devil cutting down trees and hunting game to keep himself from starving and freezing to death; and that in this way he gave life and power to those muscles we see in his picture, got to be a handsome man again and walk erect; in short, became the first pioneer of the West, and a worthy progenitor of all those who should be willing after him to stay out of doors and do something, instead of staying in the house, talking or writing nonsense, and getting cross or *imbecile*. This conjecture is not absolutely new to me, but it is much strengthened by my own personal experience for the last three weeks. My desire has been unto the women, and they have ruled over me, and under

their dominion, and with such luxuries as cocoa, rye mush, brown bread and venison steaks, a world of pleasant sensations, and not a particle of action, my *will* has been so prostrated that I have not been able to answer your letter of the fifth, nor the one received since, though I verily thought when I got them, that I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep, till I told you how good they were. I am ashamed of myself and wish somebody would turn me out of this paradise, that I might have the sensations of a man again. The body is a good place for an active, *living* spirit to dwell in, but it seems to me that mopping it out with cocoa, and then lining it up with venison steaks is not exactly what constitutes it a temple for the Holy Ghost.

. . . I am, as far as I can judge, doing perfectly well now, *doing* nothing to be sure, but then free from pain and coming right by degrees as I think. The fact is, my gossiping family have been a little fussy, have magnified things very unimportant, and if it had not been for the inestimable privilege of the *habeas corpus* and the bill of rights, would have sent me I verily believe, in mid winter into mid ocean, among icebergs and probably in a vessel "*short of coal*," for change of scene. At one time, Harry Sedgwick actually took passage for me in the *Washington*, for the 22d of *February*, with the "right of refusal within twenty days." As soon as I was apprised of my rights under the Fugitive Slave Law, I instantly and peremptorily refused to sail in the *Washington*, and thus have escaped for once the dangers of the seas; and I should feel quite comfortable and at ease, if it were not for a lurking fear that I may, in some moment of weakness, be kidnapped by my dearest friends and sent to parts unknown. I never had before such a feeling of respect for the higher law.

To Charles B. Sedgwick, Esq., of Syracuse.

*Lenox, Feb. 16, 1851.*

MY DEAR CHARLES:

I have two letters partly written to you in my portfolio, but the last is too old to resume, and now I will try again to send you a few lines, just to stir up your pure mind by way of remembrance. The fact is, I have been pottering and dawdling in my house all winter, having nothing but women to look upon, nothing to do but eat, drink and sleep, like old Father Adam in his Eden, till like him I am fairly ashamed of myself, and there will be no help for me, unless, like him, I am forcibly turned out into the world to do something. I have been subjected *occasionally* to the dominion of the women for about six months, *unresistingly* for the last three weeks, till my will, naturally weak, is nearly broken down. I have been a good deal out of sorts, but now I think I am getting up again. . . . You must not infer that I am out of spirits because I am shut up. Idleness is my element; my sister is staying with me, and Bess is so knowing and handy and loving, and quick withal, that all my wants are created and supplied before I know I have any. My wife and Grace, too, give me all the time that can be spared from the interests of learning, so that except now and then, in a moment of *morbid* feeling, when I have but a dim perception of the dignity and moral suitability of this kind of life, I am as grand as Cuffee. The mails bring all sorts of letters and all sorts of papers. I am dipping occasionally into the never-failing treasures of Walter Scott, and once or twice a week am cheered by letters from Will, in Winchester, N. H., who is getting quite a touch of life in a district school, sometimes turning boys out, and sometimes knocking them down, and thus feeling his way into the intricate science of human nature.

To his wife.

May, 1857.

DEAR E:

I am half tired to death, but fresh or weary, I must write you one more line by Mr. H., with whom I dined to-day. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday—five days—I *have* lived without you four times as long as this, and I trust I shall endure unto the end, but upon my soul, I must say, as it cannot affect your arrangements nor hasten your departure, I would not be hired for ten dollars a day to wait any longer, no, not for twenty. This is something for a person of my money-loving disposition to say, is it not? . . . . Come home as soon as possible, and when you come, do, first of all, tell me what I can do to prove that you have lost nothing by your original contract to live with me to the end. If *love*, and love alone is a compensation for everything else, I have it in abundance.

Farewell. Your affectionate

C. S.

To Charles B. Sedgwick, Esq.

1851.

. . . . . Please set it down to the credit of Lenox that it is the only town in the county, and almost in the State, where a "Know-nothing" representative was not elected; almost the only town in the State, where a "Know-nothing" lodge has not been formed. Perhaps good will come out of it; I hope so, but I confess I cannot prophesy much good of a persecuting, Protestant league, that has adopted the worst principle of the Catholic religion, its *Jesuitry*. What short of this, is this secret association, without avowed principles, or the authority of honorable names? . . . . Dear

Charley, you said you would attend the Litchfield Jubilee, and stop at Lenox. You did not stop, and therefore did not attend the Jubilee. I am glad of it. There was no dinner, no supper, no cold collation, no wine; nothing to reconcile a man that his remotest ancestors should ever have been there.

To his daughter.

*Thursday, May, 1851.*

DEAREST BELLE:

I hope I shan't die this year. I am just beginning to get rid of prejudice, or of some *prejudices*, to get beyond that contracted mind which is as poverty stricken in its enjoyments as in its judgments. I am beginning a little to see round and through things, and both sides of them. Even the House of Correction, which I have ever hated the authorities for disgracing Lenox with, has its usefulness, its dignity, its charms. How, without the relay of Spaulding's hands, could I get work done cheap—in a hurry in a stormy time—so as to quiet my mind, improve my health, and alter the look of things before you get back? We are greening up, and I want to clean up a little before you come; I want to see you mightily, but I have a fancy to have you stay till next week, when it will look prettier here. I have moved my rail fence at the foot of the hill thirty or forty feet into the pasture. It is a great *expanse*, a great gain. We have had a rain; I never desired anything much more, and hardly ever enjoyed anything half so much. It is meat, drink and cream for my new trees,—and I am getting well. It is all owing to you; your good eye, your considerate, enlarged, angel mind, your allowance of cream. I tried it gently, carefully; now I eat it three times a day—only the little white cream cup full at noon. There is no sour in it, no pain from it; digestion coming right, I eat and drink, thinking



of you, and would not offend you or do wrong for the world. Stay till next week if you like — do give my love to those dear friends, Sam and Anna. I love them and they know it. Give my love to Kate, and William, and Willie, and dear Julie, and all the Minots. Tell ——— that I have planted his trees and shall take care of them. I don't know when I shall write to him, but when I write to anybody, I shall. The clock has struck. Your mother will come to breakfast; I must bid you good-bye. I kiss you.

Your affectionate FATHER.

Oh this blessed rain! I have said my prayers this morning with thanksgiving, I hope. Love once more.

To his daughter.

*Lenox, June 8, 1851.*

MY DEAR KATE:

I trust I shall hear to-morrow that our darling<sup>1</sup> got safely home, and that neither you nor William have any cause of regret that he left her behind. The amount of sunshine that she shed about us was a compensation for all the cold weather and east winds that have so long prevailed here. Her visit was an immense pleasure, and all that I enjoy now in that way makes an unspeakable addition to the comfort of my life. I believe the little thing loves me, and she has the power that nothing else has to carry me back to the time when my love was as pure as her own. She awakens the hope too, and how precious it is, that the time will come, in spite of diet and dyspepsia, when we shall all be loving children in the arms of the Universal Father.

<sup>1</sup> His granddaughter, Alice Minot.

To the same.

November 16, 1851.

. . . . . I felt a great moving of my inclinations towards Woodbourne the other day, when your aunt went off. It was, however, some alleviation of my desire to think that I had no consolations to offer to William under his present bereavement.<sup>1</sup> When one loses his friends, there is always something to soften his heart. He can at least be thankful that he has had them at all, or had them so long, and it is always possible that they may have escaped the evil to come, but when one gives up what he is fond of and what hurts him, from the moment of separation his heart yearns after it, just as a mother does after an idiot child, or a wife after a drunken husband. There is always a present wonder about the intimate relation that subsisted so long, a sort of feeling that an idiot child or a drunken husband is a necessary incident to prolonged existence; something, I suppose, like the sudden distress of an engineer when he is approaching a collision and reverses the engine, but knows he can't stop the train nor clear the track. I am sorry for William, and I cannot after all help hoping, as his mind is evidently not hurt, but is uncommonly quick and active, that he may still find relief in his affliction, and some better substitute for his old companion.

To me.

Feb. 23, 1852.

We had here last night, and until almost three P. M., to-day, a wind that *was* a wind. Gracie came into my room at one, and gravely informed us that the house would blow down. I sent E. off to sleep with her, and the moment she went to the

<sup>1</sup> William Minot was trying the experiment of giving up tea.

other side of the house, it began to lift up on my corner, and I thought I should have to get her back to keep it down, but though it shook somewhat, it settled back again, and I found everything right this morning. I am glad to hear your account of Will. It has so happened that it has not been one of my anxieties, that he would plunge into matrimony just now. I think the difficulty of carrying wood and water into the third story for a family, would prevent it, if there were nothing else.

To Maria B. Sedgwick.

March, 1852.

. . . . . There is to be a meeting of the Horticultural Society at Goodwin's on Wednesday. Stockbridge is the place fixed upon, because that place has some *lively* women, and is to some extent a civilized and cultivated place. The meeting has been notified in the County papers where all the County and Societies' secrets are kept, and perhaps you have not heard of it. The mercury last night at Lenox fell only to 16°! it did, however, thank Heaven, get down to 18° at Schoolmaster L.'s, at the foot of Shepard's mountain.<sup>1</sup>

To me.

March 21, 1852.

. MY DEAR KATE:

I went up from Springfield with Mr. Bellows, which I did not know till afterwards, and in the evening went to hear the lecture he has delivered in divers places, and of which you

<sup>1</sup> There was much sportive sympathy between Maria and her uncle on the subject of the weather.

may have seen some sketch in the *Tribune*. The lecture was magnificent, and even from Mr. Bellows surprised me, notwithstanding I have long considered him the best preacher I know of. It was full of practical truth, and full of beauty. The idea that seemed to me to take precedence of all the others was, that intellectual freedom was the necessary antecedent of everything great and good in human nature, and in the world, and although probably not exactly new, it was so stated, illustrated, and enforced, as to make the hunkers and conservatives in governments, politics, and religion shake in their shoes, and so pure and lofty in its tone as to touch every generous soul that heard it. Alas! I fear there were not many.

I took some pains to inquire what the effect of it was on the congregation, and found there were several besides "the Hon. Mr. C——" who were very much pleased, but for most of them I guess it was "too high grammar." Sam Lyman told me a capital anecdote about it. When it was delivered in H——, a bigoted orthodox town in Essex, where every man "knows more than enough for one nigger, and not enough for two niggers" — there was no clapping, no applause, or sign of approbation, and when the lecture was over the people quietly dispersed to their several homes, and Mr. Bellows to his tavern. He took up a newspaper, and shortly afterwards a very gaunt lantern-jawed person came in, walked round and round him, surveying him but saying nothing. At last Mr. Bellows put down his paper and asked, "Do you wish to see me, sir?" To which the man replied: "Are you the person who delivered that lecture?" "Yes sir." "Do you calculate to deliver it again?" "Many times." He then took a dollar from his pocket and said, "You must be a poor man to preach such

sentiments as them. Them is my sentiments. I want to *forrod* them, and there is a dollar." Mr. Bellows said he was not poor but he would take the dollar and keep it. When you see him, ask him to tell you the story, and ask him also to strike out a witticism from his lecture which is incongruous with its grand and solemn, and earnest tone, and its solemnizing effect;—it is very funny, but does not belong there. . . .

I took up Mrs. Margaret Fuller's life to-day. It is a book to take on a journey and read by snatches in company. I wish you would read the whole of it, and make notes, and write a review, and then revise what you have written, and then publish; it will be the best thing you ever did. There are so many topics suggested by it—funny and serious, laughable to the last degree, and really touching, too,—and the contrast between her nonsense of talk, and the perhaps greater nonsense of talk of the leading minds of America, and the good sense and real beauty of action, would certainly furnish a subject for an effective and useful chapter. After all, it is rather sad to see so many superior beings furnishing their chief illustration of the power of true religion by a patient toleration of those inferior minds who can't comprehend them.

In regard to your Hungarian, I am sorry to say that there is no demand here for his talents. There is no place out of the school, and nobody in it who could draw a peacock, and then tell it from a Guinea hen. Speaking of hens, I wish you were here to eat scrabbled eggs, of which, for some time past, we have had two dozen a day, and that beside lots of the richest cream.

I am delighted that William and Kate have had such a good time, and delighted, too, that you have enjoyed their visit. It

is inexpressibly charming to find William in such good spirits. Elizabeth writes on a small sheet, up to three stamps, and I cannot make my note worthy of two; so I must bid you good-bye. With love to all,

Your affectionate brother                      CHARLES.

To me.

*Boston, Sunday, April 4, 1852.*

MY DEAR KATE:

The *warm weather* has not yet taken off the edge of William's New York visit, and he is well and in good spirits. The children, I think, behave as well as might be expected if their parents admitted they were entitled to government. They did not fret, importune, or resist, and were very sweet, and they are both affectionate. I do not think they have made any great attainment in the care of property, and Willie is certainly not yet fit for a soldier or engineer. He has several times during my visit torn up the whole track of his railroad, and upset every car in the train, to the great damage of that and the passengers inside, and he has broken his sword scabbard, without even waiting to encounter an enemy. His humming top furnished me some amusement, when his grandfather Minot did not come and monopolize it.

After tea, Ward proposed to take me to the benefit of Lola Montez! I accepted, supposing that as his guest, he had the right to choose his own mode of entertaining me, and besides I had no other way as a citizen of the State, to testify my gratitude to the benefactor of the public schools!

Mrs. ——— told me that J. was quite constant at matins and vespers, which I thought somewhat disturbed her; but there is nothing better to wake up one in the morning, or keep one awake at night, so that I do not regret it. Everybody seems to

shrink from such conversions, as if they were a weakening of their own faith. To me it only seems a part of the great Beneficence to make so many paths to heaven, that anybody who walks that way at all, may find one to go in.

To me.

*April 18, 1852.*

MY DEAR KATE :

Yesterday was a day to make one ashamed to have been impatient of east wind, and cold and snow ; and to make one resolve never again to fret about the weather. To-day it is one's duty to recall to mind all the blessings of God's providence, lest one fall into divers temptations by just opening one's mouth. I had a charming letter from Charles Elliot the other day, full of his pleasantry, but rather profane about the season, and with expressions about his mother earth anything but filial and reverential.

I am very glad to hear that Mrs. Haggerty has delayed her voyage and is coming here once more. It will be a great loss to Lenox when she goes ; she has become a sort of dependence to those persons to whom she dispenses so largely, and then she is so cheerful and agreeable that we should miss her very much.

It is nearly a day's work to go to Stockbridge and back again, and the weather has not been quite sweet enough for that mode of spending time.

To Maria B. Sedgwick.

*April, 1852.*

Will seems to be preparing for his foreign voyage<sup>1</sup> and I think that with his present energy and perseverance, he would

<sup>1</sup> This refers to his son, who was about going abroad to study law at a German university.

have got his education before he sailed, if he had begun a month or two sooner. He is now looking into American constitutions and American statistics, studying *all* the ancient and several of the modern languages, and keeping up a brisk correspondence with returned American travellers, whom he supposes well posted up in foreign affairs.

*Private.* Pray tell me, dear Rie, if your mother slept any last night, after discovering that a copy of Shakspear's plays, of an edition of 1632, full of notes and readings, had come to light, which copy knocks up much of the learning of modern times, and knocks into *pie* all the celebrated editions, now most in repute, especially Knight's, and more especially the Cambridge edition, a copy whereof was recently presented to her. I condele with your mother. But there is hardly one of her poor relations by whom her Shakspear would not be thankfully received, it is such a pretty book!

To his wife.

*Lenox, May 5, 1852.*

DEAR LIZZIE:

Bessie has come; she and the day are glory enough.  
 . . . . . I am a little vexed that Will does not put to sea. I have requested it, but I fear to command it, lest he should get aboard of the wrong vessel and go to the bottom; lest my first attempt at discipline, at the age of *sixty*, should be afterwards considered by my family ill-timed, and quite too spasmodic to be meritorious. I have had a very nice evening with Bess and Grace; they have both been pleasant, Grace funny, and we have had some merry laughs, that best medicine for the worst ills of life, as is proved by the jocund, ringing voices of the poor slaves, so frequent and cheerful that it is con-



strued into a proof of their happy condition, by those persons who cannot see that God, in His infinite goodness, sends joy into the hearts of the weariest and most heavy-laden.

The following extracts from a note of Bessie's (which has casually fallen in my way) to her aunt Jane has so vivid a picture of her father, that I preserve it here. The first paragraph relates to the forever recurring contest about the removal of the Court House from Lenox to Pittsfield, about which her father was repeatedly sent, by the friends of the Lenox location, to Boston.

He took a fit of dignity, and the more the people here were frightened, the more he was sure the Court House would stand; and the more there was a fuss and fluster, the calmer he grew; and the more young America ordered him to the front ranks to fight, the more he took a commander-in-chief's safe and lofty position away from the thickest of the fight; and now it is all safe, and we are satisfied and jubilant. Father wishes me to say for him that "he left it to the Orthodox saints to be terrified to death, and being a heretic, his faith that all would come right, never failed him." Father has had a puppy presented to him, and unlike your's, his brother was not sent with him to keep him cheerful; a constant yelping ensues, which father translates into what Miss Barrett calls "the cry of the human." He sympathizes and sentimentalizes and condoles and consoles and mourns and moans with the puppy, because he is shut in the barn to cultivate local attachments; visits him in the evening in the rain, with a lantern, and makes me think he will never enjoy heaven in peace, because he will be perpetually rushing off to the other place with a sip of water for Dives, who was very likely a puppy in his lifetime.

To me.

*December 1, 1852.*

DEAR KATE:

There is an obscurity in your note about the stock (strange that you should never be obscure about anything but money affairs). (Then follows a long letter about my affairs which my brother never neglected.) To-day I have been to see Mr. Porter of Lee, who has been suddenly called to go out of the world, and is about to do it in as sweet and calm a manner as an honest, Christian man can do. This has affected me a good deal, for we have grown old together, and had a kind and friendly intercourse. I never dreamed of surviving him, for he has had an even, quiet temperament all his life; never, till now, a day of sickness. He was of a long lived race, and expected to live to old age, and is some months my junior, and he enjoyed so much, and was so good in his household, and had such an honest, Christian profession, and so little cant for a true orthodox person, and such a grateful appreciation of his blessings, and such a prosperous, tranquil, satisfactory existence in all respects, that the disappointment is a severe one, and would upset anybody, but a faithful, filial believer in God's good and universal providence. He was very glad to see me, and as pleasant as if no fear, or evil thought disturbed him. His disease is erysipelas. It is but a day or two that it has been considered very alarming, and he will probably die to-morrow. Kiss my darling little Alice for me, and tell her I have not a doubt her letter is the sweetest ever written to a grandfather, but I cannot read a word of it. I wish you would get a Christmas present for me, for Willie and Alice. Good-night. Keep my Kate bright till the child comes to light. Elizabeth, when she comes out of school, writes mottoes till tea-time, then makes wreaths till bed-time, for the coming Christmas.

To me.

Dec. 16, 1852.

MY DEAR KATE:

Your account of persons and things at Woodbourne, and your description of the doing and seeming of William and Kate and the children will be discovered, I hope, at some time hereafter, about the time they are sitting for a family picture; I am not sure it would not be better for the descendants to engrave the description, and hang it up instead of the picture.

I have your note to-night from Olcott. It is very nice. Let us try to balance the Connecticut river stock with this surplus and be *thankful*. Nothing comes so near my idea of "green pastures and still waters," as an extra dividend of fifty per cent.

I never knew a case of a more decided advantage of riding over going afoot than William's. I wish you would tell him I am breaking my colt, and will sell him now for five hundred dollars. If he wishes to get the benefit of the other five hundred which I shall ask from him in the spring, he had better sell his own horse. Bess and Grace have written what little news there is, and I will only add that every bright sun at Woodbourne shines here, and that I am, with much love for those that are so well and happy there,

Ever your most affectionate, / C. S.

To me.

December 28, 1852.

—— gives a melancholy account of the extent and effect of the rappings, which seem in some places to pervade society, get into schools, and multiply maniacs.

If this mischief can be counteracted, now is the time, for the spiritual telegraphs are erecting all over the Union. There are,

it is said, five hundred thousand persons now in communication with the spiritual world. Mediums stand up and write without a hand to guide them, and jump up and down and dot the i's; and many men sensible in business are every day caving in, and giving currency to this pernicious wickedness. And yet, what has anybody done comparable to the Indian jugglery of stroking an old snake skin till a full grown serpent crawls about before your eyes, and trees are blasted by a curse, and made to spring out of the ground and grow while you are looking on; all which Mrs. ——— has seen with her own eyes.

To his daughter, after the birth of her son Charles Sedgwick Minot.

*Lenox, Jan. 2, 1853.*

. . . . . Therefore, dear Kate, let me tell you how sincerely thankful I am that our generally prosperous year has been crowned by the blessing of a new birth, that it is your boy we rejoice in, that we have escaped all fear, that in your health and William's, the growth in grace and stature of Alice and Willie, all things have worked together for good. William wrote me the most beautiful letter that ever was written, almost, about the naming of the boy, and as soon as I could disconnect myself with it, and think only of perpetuating Charley's name, there seemed to me a Godsend, for the purpose partly of keeping that dearest image of God's love alive. There was certainly something wonderful about that boy, or his image would not be so often recalled, and supplant every other while it is present.

You have your mother's experience, and your own sweet temper and ceaseless love and vigilance to help you in the observations which mothers chiefly make, and in the training

which mothers must chiefly give to the first direction of their young twigs. It is the father's business to acquaint his boys with the world, and to fit them for their work in it, and perhaps to work courageously; but I fancy the patient, enduring, forgiving, trusting, persevering mother gives them the first and the abiding sense of the spiritual meaning of their life in the world. Without this certainly, the experience of eighteen centuries of oppression and misery and poverty and strife and labor and sorrow and death, would give one an idea that this world, with all its changes, would be a poor world to live in. And yet in this country, with moderate desires, honest purposes, reasonable diligence and true affection, how much we have all had to enjoy, how much more is in store for our children if they live wisely. May God grant us this favor, and under all possible trials a childlike belief in His paternal providence and care.

. . . . .

There have been few things written about Mr. Webster, either by his admirers or detractors, that have pleased me. The partisan passions must have time to cool before anything like a fair narrative of his life can be written, and there will be enough in the greatness of his mixed character for the whole world to admire, and many things that his warmest friends will bitterly lament.

To the same.

*Jan. 16, 1853.*

. . . . . I had just returned from a pleasant visit at Stockbridge and a very agreeable dinner with your aunt Susan and Maria, and began in good mood an evening with the pleasure of hearing good tidings from you all, and a note written in your own hand, which is something like the

light of an exquisite landscape suddenly discovered, when one is filled with its beauty and desires nothing beyond it. There are times when I think of hardly anything but my children, and of myself only as their father, and then I am very happy, so happy, that I wish I could forget myself in every other light.

To me.

*Lenox, Jan. 9, 1853.*

MY DEAR SISTER :

I hardly know how it happened that I should have wished nobody, and especially you, a happy New Year. The fact is, it comes in a wrong time for me. The wise legislature, in its beastly proceedings, has most improperly fixed that ill chosen time for unfortunate clerks to account for their yearly receipts, and to pay over considerable sums of money which, I fancy, most of them have spent, and which at that time I never happen to have in my pocket, so that feeling rather blue just then, it seems a kind of mockery to be wishing happy new year to anybody. However, when the time is past, I generally find my concerns less desperate than they seem. I have paid up the most of my debts. The balance of eight hundred dollars in the treasury against me on the first of January is reduced to less than one hundred dollars, and there are three or four hundred due in the office with which I shall square up, and then I shall feel again, as I have many times lately, that I should be glad to join the whole universe in singing Old Hundred.

What an abominable way William has of running down his new born children. With that dishonorable exception, every mention you have made of him since you went to Boston has delighted me.

I meant not to have written a letter for a month without

speaking of Everett's letter to the French minister about the Tripartite Treaty, but I have not now time or space. Only think of the head and front of the conservatives proudly proclaiming the progressive spirit of the American democracy, and prophesying the annexation of Cuba as a fixed fact, and one of the certain blessings of mankind. It is a capital letter. I hope you have read it. I long to see the squirming of that impudent John Bull when he gets the letter. You will notice the nice mention of the Irish, starved out under the English government, and sending back five millions a year to keep their brethren alive.

I wish very much to see my darling's autograph again. Tell William I am as confident that his boy Charlie will be a handsome fellow, as I am of anything future, and I am only afraid he will be snapped up as of little faith. I wish you would please see that Willie has a nice silver fork, and that I pay for it.

Love to Kate, William, Bess, and all.

Your affectionate brother,      CHARLES.

To his daughter.

*Lenox, Jan. 21, 1853.*

DEAR BESSIE :

Your aunt returned safely at five P.M., yesterday, to our great joy.

I was particularly relieved to hear from your aunt that that friend of ours, who made himself so charming here, and inspired us with so much confidence, had not been recreant to his duty. I was greatly disturbed by that, for there are some persons to whom we give our confidence so suddenly and so strongly, and of whom we do not require proof, or desire proof,

that when they disappoint us, they commit a fault against the race, and disturb that repose in the integrity of mankind which is perhaps as much the result of faith as of experience, and besides that, they positively hurt that generous feeling of trust which lies at the bottom of affection, and gives so much of its sweetness to the intercourse of life. In short, it gives a spasmodic action to the heart, and prevents its expansion. It is worse than a crime, for that may be repented of, atoned for, and forgiven; but a moral neglect takes the warmth out of our blood and makes it black and thick, and turns the virtue of our faith into a curse. This is strong, I know, but there is nothing that seems to me much worse than letting people into your heart who don't belong there. I have written this therefore to tell you how glad I am it does not in the least apply to our young friend.

Your aunt tells me that Mrs. Ward seems perfectly well! good—good, what a nice time she has had. I am very glad.

Little Gracie has just brought home her tunic and trowsers.<sup>1</sup> She blushes so in bringing them into the house that I am afraid of a rush of blood to the head when she actually puts them on. She is going down next week, and when she and you are both gone, I know not what we shall do, but try to remember how much happier we are when you are at home, and think how much happier we shall be when you get back again.

I intend to pay you a short visit when this Court is over, which I think will be by the 5th of February.

Give my love to Mr. and Mrs. Ward. Good-bye.

Your affectionate FATHER.

<sup>1</sup> A costume for a part she was to play in some private theatricals.



The following letters relate to his son William, who had suddenly left his studies at Gottingen to accompany a sick friend to Italy.

To his wife.

Feb. 1853.

The longer I live, the more I am disposed to acquiesce in the things that happen, partly because they seem independent of our agency, and the work of a Providence that we cannot direct or prevent, and partly because I feel the deepest conviction that some of those things that have been most contrary to my will and desires, and which have caused me the greatest disappointment and uneasiness, have turned out for the best. This does not prevent the *most painful* sensations at the time, and anxieties amounting almost to insane fears.

To me,

Feb. 20, 1853.

. . . . . Mr. Higginson's son, in Germany, has written much about Will that I was very glad to hear, for it relieved me from anxiety on two points.<sup>1</sup> I was a little afraid that Will had deluded himself as to the necessity of his enterprise, and mistaken his love of travel for devotion to his friend, and that he did not care so much as he fancied about his studies, whereas Mr. H—— says that he quit his studies with great reluctance; that he made every endeavor to get some one else to take his place, and that he only decided to

<sup>1</sup> There are many passages in my brother's letters that indicate what was often manifest in his conversation, his jealousy of his fondness for his children. He was aware how often personal vanity mingles with parental love, and so scrupulous was he in guarding against self-imposed blindness, that I have often thought he judged his children with more strictness than he judged others less dear.

go, when it was ascertained that the physician's opinion was, that change of climate afforded the only chance of his friend's life; and he said there was a general expression of admiration at his decision, energy, and disinterestedness, when he found out the true state of the case. It was, as you may suppose, a great relief and pleasure to me when I heard this.

And now I have had a good time. Kate has been as usual, loving and sweet. The children ~~are~~ well, and very, very nice. William is prosperous, in good spirits, and *very kind*, and I have been dissipated, and am well. Tuesday, a dinner party here. Wednesday, at Mr. Minot's, with Judge Wilde. Evening at Chief Justice's. To-day at Ward's. Thursday, dinner at Mr. Parkman's — Kane's lecture — party at Ward's. Friday, dinner at R. Watson's — and lodging — and Forbes's — and Eustis's. Yesterday many calls in town — on Mrs. Howe, Edward Channing. Harriet gone, oh dear! Dinner at Woodbourne — R. H. Dana, Jr. — Mr. Child — Byington and Jennie Pomeroy — Forbes's at tea — no nap, but an excellent sleep. I have got through it all nicely, thanks to large quantities of beef and mutton — very little champagne — no suppers — no parties, and a pretty large quantity of excellent sherry.

To me.

*February 23, 1853.*

DEAR KATE:

Your mention of Fanny and Alexander was really very refreshing, and I am beginning to hope that my aunt Jane will skip again, (which she has rarely done lately) like lambs. One of the worst things, speaking after the manner of men, that has happened to the family, has been the heavy weight that dear Jane has had to carry, for she is rather heavy herself, and it

does not seem according to the order of Providence that any thing should impede her free course, but pounds avoirdupois. Now, if Fan gets well, as I pray she may, she can keep a carriage instead of a doctor, and that particular inconvenience can be obviated. Ask her if I shall get a carriage and pair, or only one horse and a carryall—a carryall but the baby I mean. I suppose the Captain will choose to take him in his arms.

I intended before I wrote to you, to see Bessy, and to make some effort in behalf of Jane,<sup>1</sup> but I have not done so, and think I have not had time; that is time enough to lie in bed, and to do my duty also.

To me.

*March, 1853.*

Lizzie<sup>2</sup> came safe. We had a charming evening. She describes persons as Walter Scott does landscapes, giving you characteristic actions and expressions, so that you can see pictures of your friends as you know them, and of strangers as if you had seen them before. Her description of the actors in the necromancy, and of you and her mother<sup>3</sup> handled by the fleshly arms of the spirits, was really lovely, and reconciled me, seeing that you and my sister Lizzie stood the fire of heaven's artillery so well, to the witnessing this jugglery, delusion and imposition. Still I wish you to remember, that there is a sort of countenance given to these things by visiting them; and there is a power of sympathy too, that acts strongly on the nerves and brains of such as you and Lizzie are. I would not run too much risk of catalepsy! I don't

<sup>1</sup> A descendant of our dear Mumbet.

<sup>2</sup> My brother Robert's daughter.

<sup>3</sup> We had been attending a *séance* of spiritualists.

believe in Father Gavazzi as a performer, and did not when I read his first speech. He is too coarse, and too bloody-minded. I will excuse him for his hatred of the Pope, and his revenges, but I will not follow him in getting up a crusade against the Catholics. The Protestants would not be the less bigots or persecutors.

To me.

March, 1853.

I suppose you go to the *rappers*, etc. I am not credulous or superstitious, but steady minded. That you go as a *witness* I am satisfied. Your testimony may be useful, but there is no reasoning against humbug or jugglery. I have never seen anything that was not contemptible, and I have heard nothing wonderful that might not result from fraud or collusion. The communications of all the spirits are made through the *mind* of some medium, and are, so far as I know, always coincident with the fancy or preconceived opinion of the relator. The nerves are terribly excited by fear, imagination, and in various ways, and the influence of numbers is always powerful, so much so as to produce catalepsy, and belief that twice one is one. I have a horrible dread of all these things. There are excitements enough nowadays, God knows, in the natural operation of things, without artificial means of breaking down sensitive minds, and filling insane asylums. What single good has been done, what good is proposed?

Remenyi sent me Kossuth's friend and relative to live with a common farmer in Sheffield, and he haunts me yet. He was a large landed proprietor at home, has teeth the like of which I have not seen three times this century, for beauty or whiteness, delicate hands, and the air and manner of an educated gentle-

man. He would not stay with me over night, but went right back to Sheffield with Ensign who was here, and who promised to take him home to tea, and I begged him to look up a place for him if possible. He *can't* work on land, and if he is put into a room with a hired man, he will hang himself.

To his nephew, Robert Watson.

*Lenox, June 9, 1853.*

DEAR ROBERT:

I rejoice in your joy and Mary's on account of the boy, and I suppose there would not be so much importance attached in the Scriptures to a *man*-child born into the world, if it were not, *ipso facto*, the best thing that could happen, and to people either poor or rich. I suppose it is to the one a help and excitement, and to the other a consolation, but to the between class, those who are neither rich or poor, there is so much labor of provision, so much duty of government, such awful requirements of example and knowledge, and such anxieties about disease, moral, mental, or physical, in short, the father wants so much strength of body, and strength of mind, and health, and temper, and trust in God, and submission to his will, and patient waiting for the promises, that I declare if you had not been in such a glow because it was a boy that weighed eleven pounds, avoirdupois, and if my people had not one and all responded to it with the most evident satisfaction, I should have been twice as glad to hear that Mary was safely delivered, as to know she had given birth even to *twin* boys.

In reference to a suggestion that his son William should be associated with his son-in-law, William Minot, in his office, he says:—

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, June 17, 1853.*

. . . . . If the plan should work well, and to the mutual satisfaction of William and my Will, everything that I can think or hope for of good for the boy, would result from it, not to him only but to all of us, through all our sojournings in this world, and perhaps beyond it; but do you see, my darling, that if, from contrariety of disposition or temper, there should be a want of that sympathy between them which is the bond of peace and the hope of perfectness, the silver cord would be loosed and the golden bowl broken, and who could help it? The relation of benefactor and beneficiary is the most delicate under all circumstances, and is made oftentimes more difficult by the close relationship and constant presence of both the parties. Faults of manner, peculiarities of temper, obtuseness of perception, a thousand things that one does not fancy, or perhaps misapprehends, many idiosyncrasies that do not prevent our respecting or loving those who have them, sometimes separate very near friends. These are contingencies which may always happen, and, therefore, perhaps it would not be wise to have reference to them in this case more than in any other, and in all that pertains to the future one must incur the risk of disappointment. The interest which William takes in my son and your brother will predispose him to like the boy, but nothing but his own qualities can inspire affection. . . . . The relation of brother and sister creates a sentiment, a wish, and awakens strong desires, and leads to efforts of various kinds

and much kindness, but love is a thing to light somewhere of its own accord, and to stick on the bush it falls upon, even if there be thorns upon it.

To his daughter Kate.

*November 28, 1853.*

. . . . . How the elements of happiness change as we advance in years, from a beefsteak, a fine morning, a pretty girl and a good horse, and enough to pay the bill at the livery, to the principles and spirit of life, a clear conscience, a good temper, and those sweet affections which we are all quite capable of, and which, when we have once tasted the heavenly gift, make it quite easy to believe that hell fire is a reasonable punishment for those who wilfully pervert them, or give them up for anything else. I never have such clear glimpses of the *arts*, and their meaning and use, as when you give me some graphic picture of your home and children, separating the group by their distinctive marks, and dashing upon each the colors of your love and hope. I long for genius, and a brush to make a picture for myself, that I may keep in memory the beautiful one that you impress for a time upon me. I suppose I am about as happy as a man can be who derives his happiness from others and does not make it for himself, and as I grow older I get more patient, less nervous, more hopeful, and it is only occasionally, and for a short time, that peace, pleasure and gratitude are all driven out of my mind by some anxiety about the children, or some of them, about William's health, the separation of those who have held together so long and so lovingly, or what for the time takes precedence of all other afflictions, experienced or dreaded, the trial of a new cooking stove by an Irish cook! About ten days ago, fearing that I

should get no wood to burn, I bought a "Black Diamond" coal cooking stove — sent to Albany for it, paid thirty dollars, laid in tons of coal, abandoned the best wood stove ever invented or used, put it up, and for these ten days, in our populous kitchen the most intense gloom has prevailed. The bread would not bake, the fire would not burn, the meat would not cook, and all because the cook could not remember which was the door and which the damper! This morning the Black Diamond has been replaced by the old stove; calm will be gradually restored, and no other calamity will result from it than that I shall be obliged to burn up my shed first, then my barn for fuel, and then I shall probably be past being warmed either by coal or wood, and leave it to Kitty and Bess to contrive how they will manage.

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, Dec. 21, 1853.*

. . . . . Do you know that when I awoke on the 15th of December, I was sixty-two years old! I awoke early; the thought of a poor life came over me, and it was somewhat depressing. The termination of it seemed very near, for but one of my ancestors that I know of, and none of my brothers, had reached my age. However, I thought long enough and well enough to overcome the egotism of despondency and fear, to think as mercifully of myself as a charitable stranger would be likely to do who knew the truth; to rejoice in the affections which I feel quite conscious I possess; to realize, to some extent, the extraordinary blessings I have enjoyed through life, first from my parents, then from my children and many dear friends, and lastly, that no power on earth could have produced these results, nothing short of a Being of



infinite power and infinite love. Into his keeping, like a loving child I tried to commit my spirit, longing, oh! how earnestly I cannot tell, that neither I nor mine should be ungrateful, or dishonor him. I have never said much to any of my children, dear Kate, on religious subjects, because I have seen so much cant, and hate it so thoroughly, because I dread formality in such matters more than I dread death; but I cannot recollect the time when, in my heart, I have not more desired for each and all of them a loving and trusting faith in their Maker, than any conceivable state of earthly felicity. I do not remember for a long time, a more cheerful day than the last fifteenth of December; hardly a day of my life when the joy and beauty of the world was so apparent to me, and when I should have been so nearly resigned to quit it. We know precious little of ourselves, except in certain particulars, but as far as I know, the thing I most dread is to survive some of those I love best. Next to that, perhaps, is the fear of living to tumble down in walking, or not to see or hear or feel what everybody else hears and sees and feels. There is an immense deal in the world to enjoy, and an immense deal for weak natures to fear, and after all there is nothing quite comforting but a comfortable hope of a life where there is no chance of loss, and where prosperity does not make one cold.

To me.

1853.

Our learned friend Whitney left us yesterday. He is modest and pleasing. I suppose he will publish the last book of sacred Sanscrit songs in Northampton. I hope they will be set to music in the Connecticut valley. I doubt, however, if they will wake up the sleepy heads there, or disturb their faith that

the Hebrew records are the oldest in the world. Certain I am, that if this idea is communicated to —— away goes the old man's wig, and he will die of the first shiver.

To me.

*March, 1854.*

DEAR KATE:

I believe you left me on Wednesday for the first time in our lives, without a special parting. I could not help thinking of it repeatedly that day, and since, as something unusual and unpleasant. . . . .

It seems that you have neither overdone, nor got sick, and that pleasure and health, where there is no weak conscience to prevent it, are the two things that go best together. Why should not a good, honest, social breakfast talk promote pure and undefiled religion as well as Sunday preaching, for which a man lies by six days in the week, and for which he hopes to receive in this world three thousand dollars, and in the world to come eternal life?

. . . . .  
I had a very good time in Boston — "boarded round" — slept, breakfasted and dined at S. Ward's, slept twice at Kate's, twice at U. S. Hotel, left my trunk in one place, borrowed one night-shirt, left another, saved four shillings in transportation, paid only six shillings for coaches. I returned on Saturday, the windy day, and what a wind! On the way to Pittsfield I saw pines, maples and apple trees uprooted by the way-side; and but for Bishop to keep the cars and the carriage at anchor, the one would have blown off the track, and the other blown over!

. . . . .

I copy the following as a record of my shiftlessness:

Don't you think a kind Providence has taken care of your affairs? (I do!) I should think your faith would be strong, for it does not appear to *me* that with one dishonest person near you you would be worth one cent of property.<sup>1</sup>

To his daughter Kate.

*Lenox, Aug. 6, 1854.*

. . . . . George Ashburner came here to breakfast yesterday and told a good story. One of the State Prison boys from Stockbridge, who had got out, was working for his father. Mr. Ashburner treated him kindly, and when he went away he came up to the old gentleman, full of gratitude, and said, "Mr. Ashburner, there is one thing I can tell you; if you ever get on to the tread-mill, be very particular to get next to the wall." I went two days ago to breakfast with Ward Beecher. He is a genial, merry fellow, and liberal. He says many foolish things, but many wise ones; he has got past the age when ministers talk nonsense dogmatically, and he has so much sense that when he gets a little older he will talk truth modestly, *i. e.*, for a Beecher.

*Lenox, Mass., Aug. 9, 1854.*

ROBT. S. WATSON, Esq.:

Dear Sir,—On or about the 14th of October, 1853, I received your favor of October 12th, beginning, "I got your two letters," etc. "How funny it is that the Sedgwicks can't live five minutes without writing letters." "Why don't they

<sup>1</sup> I had not "one dishonest person," and I had two brothers, Robert and Charles, watchful, careful of my concerns. Since they left me, dear Ellery has been the kind and faithful heir of this gratuitous trouble.

each have a private locomotive of their own." "I have never been able to account for the success of the cheap postal law till lately." "When the Sedgwick family die off, the postage must go up again." It so happened, that in clearing out a desk the other day, and endeavoring to get rid of some of the lumber of correspondence, I came across this letter, and said to myself, how "faithful are the wounds of a friend." I have been endeavoring, painfully and partially, for some years, to grow in grace, and as one of the most effectual steps towards it is to confess and avoid the prominent follies of one's life, I determined, as far as possible, that no more silly letters should bear witness against me, and perhaps I might live long enough to have the memory of all my *written* nonsense forgotten. Since then I have greatly improved. I am happy to perceive by your last, that you have forgotten the pain of former letter pains. . . . .

Alexander told me, not three weeks ago, of a gentleman of large business and fortune, (he did not mention his name, I suppose it was you), who received a communication on business, of three pages letter sheet. "Damn that fellow," and "damn the letter," said he, and threw it in the fire without reading. I respect the manliness of that act. I admire the courage of that man's character. I have recovered from the delusion of letter writing, but I am affectionately, and with love to your wife and children, *much*,

Yours,

C. S.

*Lenox, Mass., Aug. 9, 1854.*

Value received, I promise to pay R. S. Watson, sixty days from date, thirty-five dollars and interest. This note is upon this condition, that the said Watson furnishes me with the

necessary railroad and carriage tickets to carry me to and from the White Hills, and pays my tavern bills (liquors excepted) in the month of September next.

C. S.

Dear Bob, the Court sits September 12th; can you fix it so I can go?

To Robert Watson.

Lenox, Aug. 13, 1854.

DEAR BOB:

I think I have the upper hand of you now. In October I received a letter from you, in which you cut me up and my family for a "*cacoethes scribendi*." It was all just, if serious, and a good joke if not, but it fell far short of those maledictions which I have poured out repeatedly on my own family, and owned up to, as deserving myself in former times. Unfortunately, instead of framing that letter, and having it hung up one week in my sister's chambers, and then two in my wife's, and occasionally refreshing my own mind with its perusal, I threw it into the clerk's desk, where I happened to receive and read it, and *utterly forgot* it, till I happened to clear out the rubbish of my desk a few days ago, and threw it with waste paper on the floor of the Court room, where there are now corn baskets full of old papers.

It occurred to me when I answered your White Hills letter, that I would try to fish it out and put into you; luckily I found it, and what you suppose I have cherished in my memory for months with hurt and resentful feelings, I was obliged to transcribe from the paper before my eyes. Will you own beat for once? (you never did in any of your devilish, nonsensical, political notions) if not, I have only to add that while I reserve to myself, in common with my most worthy friends, the

privilege of lying, I never stick to it if found out, never swear to it, and when inquired of, if it be a lie or not, own up. It is as hot as flames here. The earth is dry down to Sims's hole. The potatoes first formed don't grow, and I have the happiness of informing you, that this sticks in my crop more than any of the misunderstandings between us; for I don't make much account of them, or reproaches uttered that do not come in cold blood from fixed opinions, or from a purpose to hurt. Many of the Sedgwick tribe go off at half cock, they can't stop to load, and therefore there is nothing but priming and a flash in the pan, which I am so used to from you and your impetuous, impatient cousin Bess, and so free from myself, from my own phlegmatic temperament, that though I do sometimes involuntarily turn up my nose at both of you, I go quietly to sleep and only wish when I wake up, that you would both learn wisdom by my calm example. As to the White Hills, as Mary is going I don't mind your being of the party, and though you decline indemnifying me for the expenses thirty-five dollars, I shall go, if it comes right when you happen to start. Let me know that time, but do not act in reference to my Court which sits the second Tuesday, for two weeks. I humbly crave your pardon for three sides of a sheet which I have most uncereemoniously written, and am, with as much affection as it is prudent to express for so impertinent a relative, your

UNCLE CHARLES.

To Charles B. Sedgwick.

1856.

I wish you would stop and see us. You must look out sharp, that you do not put it off too long, for you see I was *sixty years* old the night of the Press supper. Good heavens! how old I

am. I never dreamed of such a thing. I feel myself a thousand, yet I am boyish, and mean to be while I live.

. . . . .  
 ——— says that ——— is quite blind. What a pity it seems that B ——— who uses his eyes to make himself and other people wiser, should get blind, while L ———, who uses his to blind himself and make others blind, should be the one to keep his eye-sight. B ——— used to read good books; ——— never reads anything but bad promissory notes ——— *I guess!*

. . . . .  
 I find I stick to you and Robert (Watson) like chestnut burrs; to him I am bound by old cords which have grown strong by mutual sorrows as well as joys. I cannot lose the chance of being with him. Can't you compromise?

To Charles B. Sedgwick, Esq., of Syracuse.

*Lenox, Nov. 22, 1854.*

. . . . . As I always think of you as carrying away or retaining, wherever you are, an atmosphere of love, in which heart answers to heart without a word said, I was not greatly troubled by your silence, though I confess I did cast about anxiously, to think whether I could have caused it. It did not occur to me, as it should have done, to charge it to that devilish fever and ague, for I know from my own experience, that various physical causes, dyspepsia, sea-sickness, chills and fever, and a thousand other things besides poor brandy and good mince pie, take all the sweetness out of a man, his heart and soul, and all the mind there is in him, except just enough to know that he is no better than spoiled meat! Is it even so with women? What a deplorable state! Why can't we, dear Charles, take better care of this body of our's while it lasts,

made a fit temple for the Holy Ghost, to nourish sweet charity and love unfeigned, and turned by gross carelessness, or neglect, or abominable abuse, into a place for devils and cancers. If the common causes of ill health were not diversified by climate, inheritance, great labor, hard trials, sudden exposure, blameless ignorance, and sundry other things which seem to be in the order of God's providence, and are no doubt wisely meted out to us for various ends of goodness, there should be a law to punish a sick man in the first stages of sickness, and in case of gross disorders, capitally, without benefit of clergy, or the possibility of the Governor's pardon. . . . .

In the same letter, speaking of the recent engagement of his second daughter, Bessie, he says :

. . . . . I am not only satisfied with the match, but I am delighted that Bess should have fallen into such hands, for I feel quite sure she will be appreciated and tenderly treated. I cannot, probably, have a much greater privation than to lose her, but if it is well with the child, I shall be well content.

To his daughter.

*Lenox, Oct. 12, 1854.*

MY DEAREST KATE :

. . . . . My heart turns to you and yours, and O! (after reading the details of the loss of the Arctic) with what longing desires, that He, who has carried us through so many fears and perils, without suffering a hair of our heads to be touched, and has endowed us with such exquisite affections and so nearly perfect love, would guide and guard us, that we may continue to love wisely, but not too well; not so well as to forget that we have been, and are, held in the hollow of His



hand, while thousands and thousands go mourning about the streets, and must mourn, and some with inevitable loss. I missed only one thing in the superabounding pleasures of Woodbourne, our Sunday service read by William. I understood his reason or thought I did. It has been mine repeatedly; a fear of not meeting with a ready and perfect sympathy, and yet it seems to me that, anybody proposing it, there would follow a spontaneous worship; *heartfelt* it must be, for what mockery is there so frightful as pretended reverence of the Universal Father? what heartlessness so horrible as lukewarm worship?

To the same.

*Lenox, July 15, 1855.*

Speaking of a friend who had been in a morbid state of mind, he says:

Several times I came near speaking out my mind to her in bitterness, but she was occasionally so affectionate, and all the time so unhappy, that I was afraid in my ignorance I might do her injustice, and increase the evil I intended to cure; and, moreover, whatever might be the state of her mind, I was well persuaded, and have long been, that reproaches never clear the understanding, nor sweeten the affections. All of us, I fancy, at different periods of life, get shocks that paralyze our hearts for a time, as effectually as our limbs get palsied, often without our fault, and whether with or without it, we need the sympathy and tenderness of those who love us, much more than their severity. I am more and more satisfied that God made us as we are, and it is a great blunder to quarrel with His works, instead of trying to learn His patience.

*C. C. P., Jan. 12, 1855.*

MY DEAR ROBERT :

Three nights ago I heard of your misfortune, or rather of your accident, for it takes a long time to ascertain whether the things we dread are a calamity or a blessing. The definitions are given to words from a general theory of life, quite independent of personal experience. However, our impulses are instinctive, and our experience so slowly perfected, that I could not help feeling badly to think of you as suddenly prostrated and deprived in a moment of all the active powers of life, and inasmuch as sympathy rises in the market when it is the only commodity in demand, I felt a great desire to offer you mine.

But this is the criminal turn. The hard times have nearly doubled the prosecutions. The Court House has been thronged by loafers, vagabonds, and scoundrels, making the air pestilent with their breath, and a young, brawny, new judge, as strong as a horse, has kept grinding in his mill from half-past eight to nine and half-past nine, and with such a variety of cases that I have had no breathing time till a case now on trial was called on, which is likely to occupy a couple of days. It is a curious circumstance that while so many persons are thrown out of employment by the hard times, the adulterers, poisoners, burglars, assaulters, thieves, counterfeiters and incendiaries have abundance of leisure for their various professions.

But first of all, dear Robert, how is it with you? Have you pain? Do you fret that the Lord taketh no delight in the legs of a man? That your own strong legs which followed your will and pleasure in all directions, perfecting plans, and giving all sorts of variety and excitement to life, all of a sudden refuse to move? Do you think over the thousand things you would have done, and wish to do, and gnash your teeth with vexation and disappointment? In short, are you eating your soul up,

or have you the grace to say, "peace be still," and are you taking comfort that in the passive state, for which you had made no provision, there is a world of beauty opened before you in the tender sympathy and sweet service of those who love you much? I am always a little afraid of the trials of patience, with nervous, excitable persons like you, whose perceptions are as quick as a flash, whose instincts form conclusions long before a jury can be empannelled to try a cause, and sometimes let out the wrong man's guts, and then crawl on their bellies in remorse and anguish to render even a small service to the widow and children. You see I am ready to sympathize with you in every contingency and state of mind. I only want to know whether to pity or rejoice with you. I can very easily see that you may be sadly afflicted, and it is quite as easy to hope that you are strong enough for your changed condition, and that you acquiesce in it as something quite compatible with your welfare and happiness. To me I confess it does not seem so very horrid that a man should be shut up for a month with a devoted and very agreeable woman, and from five to ten children in the daily development of all sorts of curious qualities of mind and heart. One of the first things I thought of (forgive me) was that you could not come to me in January, as you half promised, which I had counted on.

What a singular year of experience this has been, at home and abroad, for all sorts of calamities, public and private, for prosperity and privation, frauds of all sorts, crime, misery and sudden death. These things have followed in such rapid succession, and with such surprise and fear, that I am prepared to be thankful for me and mine that nobody very dear to me has turned out to be a fool or a knave. One of the singular features of the present term of the Court is the great number of

prosecutions under the Massachusetts "Maine" law. It should have been entitled a bounty for the sale of spirits in large quantities without license, for the effect of it is to give to Irish men out of work, and Irish women with nine children and one at the breast, two months' board, washing, lodging, and good fires in the heart of winter, at the public expense. You can't think how the Irish men and women appreciate this privilege, how cheerfully they plead guilty to what the Yankees call a crime, which they consider a successful stratagem, and with what light hearts they go from a state which promises only a precarious subsistence, to the prison where they live like fighting cocks.

To give you some notion of the practical effect of this ingenious contrivance in Massachusetts for moral reform, I must tell you that a number of Irishmen and about half a dozen Irish women, sentenced to a fine of "one hundred dollars or sixty days imprisonment" as the law requires, for being "common sellers of intoxicating spirits," have walked off to gaol as pleased as possible. Two women, each with a sucking child, have left numbers of children to be taken care of by the town, and accept two months' provision as a great boon. There is one funny case here, an Irish woman from Adams, and one of the prettiest women in the county, has pleaded guilty of selling, and she begs a suspension of the sentence, "because her friends have promised to raise one hundred dollars for her," she herself, "not having a cent of money," and not being able to pay the costs, wishes to beg off on payment of the fine. The Irish nation are gathered around her, all swearing she is the best woman in the world, and the prettiest and the poorest, that her husband has left her, and that she has no other mode of getting a living, and that they have contributed one hundred dollars for

her relief. I went to the District Attorney to beg her off for one hundred dollars, and save her the costs, fifty-nine dollars, and he tells me she has one thousand dollars in bank! and that within a short time her husband has sent a present to their child of two hundred and fifty dollars!

The case now on trial is for attempting to fire a store to recover a policy. The defendant is B——, formerly a genteel carpenter, who built my wood house and cheated me, and has since been a pedlar in Chicago and a merchant in Pittsfield.

. . . . . He is on trial before a capital jury, and will go for it, unless some men of weak nerves find it impossible to send a respectable man to prison, who has a pretty wife in Court and respectable connections. Excuse me for this long yarn; upon my honor I would not have sent it, if you had not quit business. Give my love to Mary and the children, and let me know if "it is well with you."

Your affectionate uncle, CHARLES.

To me.

Feb. 7, 1855.

DEAR KATE:

Our letters are somewhat like the conversation of the two men, dropped in the middle on the banks of the Rhine, and renewed the next year at Beyroot, with this difference, that I forget where we left off. I have now yours of the 4th, which has reached me with the ordinary despatch. If anything can make up for the slowness of Uncle Sam's messengers, it is your letters which are always fresh and refreshing. I shall expect by far the happiest Sunday of the year, if you spend it with us.

I presume the frost this year, for want of snow to protect the ground, will penetrate to Sims's hole, and that the mud will be

boiling up in the roads next spring till June. In spite of the cold, we sleep warm, according to some theory that the oxygen is increased by it, and that the internal fires of the system burn best when the mercury is low, provided always that you take the precaution to keep your hat on, and stick nothing but your head out. At any rate, everybody is cheerful, except those who will not stay at home and let well enough alone. There have been no howling winds coming up from the coast, or blowing off to sea, to make one shiver with fear through an imagination of scattered wrecks and frozen bodies.

I am very glad to hear your account of Mary Parkman, and of our dear old friend Judge Wilde. I hope his life will be watched to the end. I hope and believe, that when his old house tumbles down, as everything must, according to William, that is exposed to the weather in this climate, he will have a splendid mansion in a better one. Most men's souls take the hue of their bodies, which are blanched with cold, get black with dyspepsia, or settle on the lees in old age, and get stale like beer; but his magnanimous soul shines through always, and one never feels in his company that it is bed time, that the candle is nearly burned out, and that it is time to go to sleep.

I have had a most unprofitable excitement about the native Americans, and blew away at them and about them everywhere, sometimes profanely, whenever I got a chance. They are certainly detestable.

To me.

*March 18, 1855.*

MY DEAR KATE:

. . . . . Do you believe, against the authority of the Russian minister, that the Emperor is dead? What a strange feeling it gives one, that the heart and face of

society and the fate of nations are instantly changed by the expiring breath of a human being! that the accident of an apoplexy in St. Petersburg should quell in a moment the passions of millions, stop the conflict of armies, and set the heart of nations at rest for thousands of miles! and yet it is not an accident that a great despot should have great power—that God should take his spirit from him, and that his power should fall in an instant upon one of gentle blood. I am, every now and then, startled to think what a time we live in—that events so distant, of such magnitude, are happening from week to week and so likely to change the face of the world, that we look forward to the arrival of a steamer as to something that is to carry us beyond our private affairs, or lift us above them. I think the present contest is done, if Nicholas is dead, but what will follow, God only knows. If a million of men can be got to cut one another's throats because the Emperor of Russia wishes to carry his dominions across the Turkish frontier, and because those who oppose him prefer that Mahometans should rule, what is to be done, when that contest is ended, with those mighty forces, with those wrongs and miseries long endured and unredressed? The only consolation I have in these wars is, that most people ought to be killed for their infernal selfishness. The next spree I shall look for, will be from Louis Napoleon. He has got his foot in and on the neck of Great Britain, and what he will do with his ally I am curious to see; at all events John Bull is humbled.

In April, 1855, my brother, while staying with his daughter, Mrs. Minot, at Woodbourne, had a sharp attack of illness by which he was very much prostrated. He rallied from it slowly, and never recovered anything like health. The following is an extract from a letter to me, written a few days after his return to Lenox.

DEAREST KATE :

. . . . . I found the kindest note at home from Mr. Bryant, begging me to go there this month with you. If I were stronger, I should enjoy it greatly, but I get too soon tired by company or exercise. . . . . To tell you the truth, after I did get sick, I was a little superstitious about the "grand climacteric" as they call it, that seven by nine glass, through which a feeble man sees darkly. However I am better now.

The spring is opening, and the buds are swelling, and I take great delight in this, and watch every sprinkling of green in the grass, and I mean to plant and prune as if I were to live forever. And Bessie is better now, they say,<sup>1</sup> and her condition has weighed heavily on me. A great part of the winter my heart has been sorrowful, and sometimes heavy ; it is getting lighter now. It makes it so to think of your good health and spirits. Take care of both for my sake. I have had a theory all my life, that the mere pursuit of pleasure was not wise, that it was sure to end in disappointment. However, I have always practised it, in spite of my theory, and the last experiment at Boston has satisfied me that the theory was right.

To Robert S. Watson, Esq.

*Lenox, April 20, 1855.*

MY DEAR ROBERT :

Before you order me any more things, I wish you would send me a schedule of your property or the amount of your net income, with a memorandum of the investments and their

<sup>1</sup> His daughter Bessie had been ill for several months, and had been the greater part of the time at a water-cure establishment.



probable security, for anxiety is the thing I wish to avoid. I am fully aware of your generosity and love; you have done enough to impress that upon me; now I should like to know, if there is reasonable prudence with it. I have thought many times, how kind it was in you to come home with me, and do the most disagreeable thing in the world, keep watch of a half dead carcass, when you had other fish to fry, and were leaving behind you so much young and bounding life; and when the spring work was coming on, and the buds on every one of your trees were swelling with beauty, which an old man can compare to nothing, and a young man to nothing but that virgin breast whose first throbbings made a part of his immortal life. I was very sorry to hear Mary is unwell; and I can hardly realize that she should faint or flag, for never in more than one or two persons in my life, have I seen such a bright, loving, triumphant spirit; one that seemed to throw so much light over the whole countenance and frame, and fill every vein and muscle with life. She has always been a wonder and sometimes a study to me, and before you get this, I trust her mind will recover its accustomed sway; leaving her reflection and prudence enough to see that with seven children to look after and direct, a household of care, and a sick servant that she cares for as a child, and a heart that in the midst of her gaiety requires every duty to be performed, she must relax her energy a little, and give her body and her mind a little repose; constant incessant friction will not do for the most exquisitely fitted human machine, even if it is kept oiled with the oil of gladness. Give my love to her, tell her to be a good woman, and keep still once in a while; put an extinguisher on her lamp occasionally, and then relight it, and not let it shine all the time like a Drummond light.

To me.

*Sunday, P.M., April 29, 1855.*

MY DEAR KATE:

I am very sorry that sister E. is so poorly. I have so distinct and painful an impression of her low spirits as I have once or twice seen her at home, and the effect of them on my own, and remember so well the contrast between them and the exhilarating effect of the energy and raillery and fun of her happy hours, that I cannot think of the whole house but as under a heavy cloud, when she is out of sorts. The melancholy of a servant, or the most inconsiderable member of a family creates a perceptible diminution of most persons' spirits; and anything approaching to illness in the head of the house, and a person so capable of diffusing pleasure as Lizzie is, in her bright hours, seems to me more than a present trouble—something like an impending calamity. I hope the sun will soon shine all over your house from attic to basement.

To me.

*May, 1855.*

DEAR KATE:

The Court adjourned yesterday. Last night we had a lovely rain and to-day the weather has been delicious. I enlarged your bed where the larches are. I put in three cart loads of as good soil as the roots of a rose ever rioted in. I also put your two beds by the windows into one, and now if this weather continues I shall miss you greatly every day.

*In spite of the season* I read your report. It is very nice, and you ought to have more money, but you must recollect that, for the most part, it comes from parents who don't know how to train, their own lawfully begotten children and don't

believe in the reformation of adults born of bad blood and thrown into the streets by their own mothers.

To me.

May 8, 1855.

MY DEAR KATE:

I do not believe any man ever had more to be thankful for, in the watchful care of a sister, than I have for yours, and not now and latterly, merely, but from my earliest recollections; and I often bless you when you do not see a sign or hear my voice, and if I often disappoint you in doing or not doing the specific thing that you desire, I endeavor to do that which finally, and with fuller knowledge, I think you would approve.

. . . . .  
I have done nothing to-day but to dig up, and plant, as well as I know how, some roses from the meadow, in the hope of resuscitating some damasks which were there, and giving them new roots, but they belong to an ancient aristocratic family that is dying out I fear, and will not flourish in these democratic grounds.

Lenox, Nov. 24, 1855.

MY DEAR MARIA:

I feel no great want now but of a *self-supporting secretary*. I have not the time to acknowledge the many favors I receive, till they are forgotten by those who send them, and yet it does not seem to me that I am ungrateful. Your note from Stockbridge, on Monday, was considerate and even kind, and I meant to have told you so *right away*, but alas, when a man has *studied* idleness for a year, and got perfect in it, it is as

hard to write a note before the mail closes, as to dance on a slack rope. . . . .

I shall keep your note as a part of your autobiography. It was great. You mention the arrival of —— as the prophets foretell future events, as the apostles record them, as the Bible Society publishes Solomon's Song and the Gospel, without *note* or *comment*. There is not an Eheu! in your note, or even an exclamation point; what other calm, great soul is there in Stockbridge, at peace with itself, and relying on Providence, that could have mentioned such an advent without some expression of wonder at its hidden meaning, or betraying some fear of the results? I had most unexpectedly last night a long and affectionate letter from Mr. Bellows.

Give my love to your mother and Sara, and Mr. Watts. Tell Sara that I look upon her advice and example as the condensation of the Gospel teaching, together with that of Brodie and *Perin*, and that I endeavor as far as I can, to adopt the one and follow the other; and as soon as it gets stinging cold, I shall expect to meet her on foot at Bradley's.<sup>1</sup>

Your affectionate C. S.

In June my brother's daughter Bessie was married to Mr. Rackemann, and immediately went to Europe for a tour of three or four months. His relation with her was the most intimate and delightful that can subsist between father and daughter, and he felt most keenly the loss of her daily presence and society. He consented to take a journey in July to Mount Desert (then scarcely known to the travelling public), with his wife and some other friends. It was hoped the change would be of service to him, but the fatigue, exposure and bad food proved disastrous in their effect upon him, and he came back

<sup>1</sup> About half way between Lenox and Stockbridge.

less well than he went. From that time until his death, the following year, his health, with slight variations, steadily declined. Mrs. Robert Sedgwick invited him to pass the winter at her house, in New York, that he might have the benefit of a milder climate, and of the best medical advice. He went there early in December, and remained until April. While there he lost two life-time friends, who were very dear to him. But though enfeebled by illness, he received the news of these events calmly, and bore them with the patience and sweetness that invariably characterized his disinterested life. Of Mr. Byington he says, in a letter to Mrs. S. S.:

The trials of his life have accomplished the most perfect discipline of patience, forbearance and gentleness in his naturally impatient and irritable disposition. He led a life of dignity, and has left a sweet though sad memory to his friends.

To Charles B. Sedgwick.

*January 24, 1856.*

DEAR CHARLES:

I have been fretting about you every day I have been here, more than a month ago, and yesterday when your letter came to me, I was on the point of writing to know whether you were in the body or not. I suppose I have still lodged in my body somewhere, the cursed *skupp* of Mt. Desert. I wrote to you before I left Lenox to know what had befallen you, whether you were alive or no? whether you had failed? whether you had swallowed saltpetre and lost your affections? and at last I have your letter of the old stamp—genuine.

To his wife.

*New York, Jan. 20, 1856.*

DEAR LIZZIE :

I had given up the hope of hearing from you yesterday when your letters came at six in the afternoon. Yours brought tears into my eyes. How grateful we ought to be for dear Will's success, in arguing his first case in St. Louis! God has enabled you to make his path smooth, to give him light to walk in, and ought we not to give Him the praise?

. . . . . It is my joy to think that your children love and appreciate you as your children should, and particularly to think that Bessie's new alliance, which, I believe, is very close, has not abated one jot of her affection for you; on the contrary, I believe she thinks of you more lovingly, more frequently, and more admiringly than ever. I rejoice that I am the father of those children, every one of them, for through them you must needs think of me tenderly. Do try to think that there was a little good blood in me, and that every drop of it was mingled with your pure, sweet, heavenly nature. Every day I give thanks for you, and ask for blessings from above, and pray for nothing more in this world for myself, but a thankful heart, and resignation and conformity to God's will,

To his wife.

*New York, March, 1856.*

. . . . . If people, whose souls are bound up in their sons and brothers while alive, and who love them so tenderly that no tongue can tell how much, were to devote themselves generally, when they depart, and *cheerfully* to every active duty that humanity can claim of them, I fancy that the gloomy reserve and seclusion which so many practice, and seem

to consider a sort of sacred duty to the memory of the departed, would go out of fashion.

The following are fragments of letters to his daughter Kate, during the last six months of his life.

Nobody but God knows how much I have sinned from fear and anxiety lest some awful change should visit us. I am becoming better a little, I think, less anxious and more confiding from year to year, and it is the desire of my inmost heart that I may mean and feel what I say from day to day, "Thy will be done."

*New York, April 13.*

I am quite desirous now to get to Lenox and to meet you there, and am waiting to hear that the snow is gone *in the highway* between my barn and the Court House, and between Phelps's and Biddy Holden's. . . . I hope not to delay going so long as to make it inconvenient for you to meet me there. That is as necessary, after what you have said, as my daily bread, and that is enough, with my return *home* and William's generous and cheerful acquiescence, to make my daily bread sweet and as nutritious as possible. After so long an illness and so much and such complete internal disorganization, I do not think it wise to expect much strength, or any very near approach to health again. . . . I would give a dollar to see little Charlie with his spade.

By the unanimous desire of the Berkshire bar my brother retained his office as Clerk of the Courts, so long as there was the slightest hope of his restoration, the duties being performed

in the meantime by his "trusty and well beloved" friend, William Tucker, who had for many years been his assistant in the office. When, at last, he resigned it, he received from all the members of the bar the warmest expressions of regret and sympathy.

In April he returned home. He was impatient of a longer absence from his wife, who had been only able to leave her school for an occasional brief visit to him in New York. He had also ceased to hope anything more than partial and temporary relief from medical aid. His suffering had become constant and was often severe, particularly from dropsy, which made his breathing very laborious, and almost every movement painful. He took cold on the journey, and was so ill for a few days that we thought he could not rally again, but he did. His interest in his place, and in every living thing upon it, never abated; as soon as the weather and the state of the ground would permit it, he managed to go about his grounds (on a pony when he could not walk), and direct everything that he wished to have done, as is shown in the following note from Mrs. Rackemann to Mrs. Minot.

*Lenox, June 19, 1856.*

. . . . . Father is much the same. He has no nausea for the present, and though his feet are much swelled, he seems pretty comfortable. He has this morning been out two hours, bought a cow, engaged a pasture for another, bargained for a lot of chickens, attended to a celery trench, settled about some oats, and before dinner after his nap, worked a few minutes with the little hoe. Still he is very weak, and at times depressed; generally, however, wonderfully patient and hopeful and cheerful.

He usually drove out for an hour, and almost always had some errand of kindness to do. Only three weeks before his death, when the motion of the wagon over the uneven country roads was exceedingly painful and distressing to him, he could



not give up the pleasure of carrying relief to a poor, sick young lad, a mile or two out of the village. The intense heat of the month of July caused him great suffering. His nights were restless — often almost sleepless — and at the earliest dawn of the long summer day he would leave his bed, and have his easy-chair placed at a window overlooking his grounds; there, with a copy of the Psalms always beside him, he spent many hours of loving and grateful communion with nature and with God. When he became too weak to talk with the friends who came to see him, his brightening eye and the warm pressure of his hand still made them welcome, and his few words expressed his affection for them, some tender enquiry for the absent, or some touch of his old delightful humor. On the third of August he entered into his rest. The funeral took place at Stockbridge on the sixth.

Ah! my brother! how lovingly, how fitly, were you lain down. Harry and Ellery<sup>1</sup> (the two others I did not mark—I am sure they were near friends), slowly, as if their pulses stopped, as if they would still hold back that precious mould of earth, let down that faithful son into the bosom of his mother earth. The vision is still present to me.

These words conclude Miss Sedgwick's tribute to her brother. I subjoin in the appendix to this volume some notices of my father, which appeared in the public prints after his death. I give also a letter to Miss Sedgwick from a dear young friend of hers, because of the truth and beauty with which it describes both his character and his relation to his sister. If I were to insert all the tributes of love and gratitude and admiration for my father, and of sympathy for their loss, that flowed in upon his family on every side, I could readily fill another volume.

I ought, perhaps, to say in explanation of so many of the letters in this volume being addressed to me, that I was the only one of his children who had permanently left his home some years before his death, and during this period he habitually corresponded with me.

K. S. M.

<sup>1</sup> Our dear nephews.

## APPENDIX.

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*August 13, 1856.*

MY DEAR MISS SEDGWICK :

How impossible it is for me to tell you with what poignant grief I heard of your beloved brother's departure. . . . How can we spare his genial, noble, generous spirit, with its unflinching sympathy and tenderness for every human heart, his friendship so constant and so true, with all a woman's sweetness added to a man's strength and depth ! Let us hope it is still not far removed from us, that its influence is as near and tender as ever, that that large heart of his is pouring forth its love with greater power than ever, upon all those so dear to him.

Most precious will ever be to me his kindness of many years ; he has been loved as few are loved, and no one can ever forget, who has enjoyed it, the peculiar delicacy and warmth of his sympathy. To you, dearest friend, his twin soul, what his loss must be, none but God can know, and no other can fill the dreadful void.

. . . . . How my memory goes back to my many talks with your brother about you — talks on the low couch in the parlor corner, and in the sunny meadow, while the hay perfumed the air, and in the rocky ice glen, and on the breezy hillside. Everywhere the place was forgotten in the person, for you filled all the foreground. His heart overflowed in tenderness to you, like the heart of a lover.

## CHARLES SEDGWICK.

The morning papers announce the death of Charles Sedgwick, which took place at Lenox, on Sunday morning, the 3d inst.

He was the youngest son of the late Judge Sedgwick, of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, and was brother of Theodore, and Henry, and Robert Sedgwick, all of whom, after lives of eminent usefulness, have gone before him, and of the sweet authoress who survives him. Like his brothers he was educated for the bar, but his gentle nature was spared the harsh conflicts of litigation by his appointment, early in his professional life, to the office of Clerk of the Supreme Court of the State. This obliged him to remove from the family seat at Stockbridge to Lenox, the county town, where he resided, still holding the same office, until his death at the age of sixty-four years.

His life was distinguished by its sweetness. A loveliness almost feminine suffused and softened an ardent, vigorous nature. To an inquiring mind, keen perceptions and a refined taste, he united strong humor and the most comprehensive sympathies. With feelings capable of great earnestness and enthusiasm, he possessed common sense and good judgment, and constant faith in man. He was, therefore, an excellent adviser of young and old, and was equally beloved and respected by all. He was not a philanthropist in the ordinary sense of the word, but he met those with whom he was brought in contact with far more than common interest. His face, tones and manner expressed good feelings, his conversation was persuasive, his humor affectionate, his opposition delicate and winning.

A superior spirit radiated from him, and no one could be with him, without feeling that he had a friend. His daily life was a joy to all who knew him, and in the magnificent scenery of his home there was nothing more beautiful than his kindness.

His house has been for years the centre of hospitality and

refinement, and the news of his departure will carry sadness to many in every part of our own country and of Europe who are indebted to him for bright hours and better feelings.

*Evening Post.*

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### MR. CHARLES SEDGWICK.

*Lenox, Wednesday, Aug. 7, 1856.*

Mr. Charles Sedgwick's funeral took place in the midst of a pouring rain, at 4 P.M., yesterday. Dr. Dewey arrived just in time; he read the Scriptures, and made a few impressive and touching remarks about Mr. Sedgwick's character, and Dr. Bellows followed with a prayer. Notwithstanding the tremendous searching storm—here one of the very severest I ever knew—the house and grounds were crowded with people, rich and poor, high and low, vieing in their desire and effort to testify their respect and affection for this beloved man. Twenty four Irishmen begged leave to carry Mr. Sedgwick's body on *their shoulders* to Stockbridge, six miles! They said they would go *on their knees* if it were considered any more expressive of their love. The weather was such, that they were not allowed to carry the body, except for a-half mile at the beginning and end of the journey; but they walked all the way, and the flood made the water up to their knees in several parts of the road. A procession of great length, all the best and many of the poorest of the people, followed the body to its resting-place. There, in a grave scooped in the sand, the remains were laid, and four of Mr. Sedgwick's nephews gently shovelled the earth in upon his dust, while the kindred all, and a great assembly, stood round for an hour in the midst of the rain, to see the last office performed. It was unspeakably affecting; more so than anything I ever saw.

The testimonies of love, which each and all rival each other in paying the memory of this lovely person, are most touching

and instructive. Such is the effect a gentle, sweet, and disinterested life and character produce! Such is the reward of simple goodness! With a disposition, of the greatest natural sweetness, a felicitous constitution, and circumstances highly favorable to his peculiar germ of character, he has flowered out almost as naturally and spontaneously as a rose, emitting a fragrance of which a whole region has partaken. Perfectly uncorrupted by the world, fond of simple pleasures, without any urgent and straining business, with no vehement desires, or stormy passions, or even engrossing tastes, his soul lived in the present—for every day—expending or rather enlarging itself in little kindnesses, smiles, words of sympathy, looks of love, deeds of mercy, crumbs of comfort. *Humanity* was his unaffected passion. With “a face of the Beatitudes,” his presence was a benediction. “The eye that saw him, blessed him, the ear that heard him, bore witness to him.” He was every man’s brother, without the pain of adoption! a natural keeper of the Christian law of brotherly love, *illustrating* what is so usually *obscured* even by the painful effort of his followers’ lives—our Savior’s declaration, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

In his sleep, half delirious perhaps, he muttered, “I don’t want a mark set upon Cain!” What a characteristic expression of his loving sympathy, which ran back to the remotest past and included the most undeserving and unpitied of our race. His death was expected by his friends, but apparently sudden to himself, if even recognized. He had much enjoyment even to the last, clinging to life for its own sake, and not from the fear of death, which at times he embraced as a blessing, and never dreaded for anything beyond it. And so this beautiful, complete, happy, and exemplary life has concluded! Our friends here are calm and submissive; the loss they have experienced is one it will take the remainder of their lives fully to realize; the blessing they have had, one that will extend its support and comfort and spiritual presence over the rest of their earthly existence. God bless the lesson to all of us! B.

## THE LATE CHARLES SEDGWICK.

Died, at Lenox, on the 3d of August, 1856, Charles Sedgwick, Esq., late Clerk of the Courts for the County of Berkshire.

Mr. Sedgwick's death brings grief to a very wide circle of friends, and though the fact that for more than thirty-five years he had faithfully served the Commonwealth in the very responsible office of Clerk of the Courts for the County of Berkshire, is a sufficient reason why his death may be publicly noticed, it is by no means the principal one. His family name has for two generations been widely known and honored. He was the youngest son of Theodore Sedgwick of Stockbridge, who was Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives in the sixth Congress, and subsequently a Justice of the Supreme Court of this Commonwealth; a man whose weight of character, fine accomplishments, and most dignified person, are still remembered and spoken of with respect and admiration by the elders of our community. Judge Sedgwick left four sons, who all followed their father's profession of the law. But Charles, the youngest, not having the robust constitution necessary for the severer labors of the bar, accepted the office of Clerk of the Courts very early in his professional career, and continued to hold it to the great satisfaction of his fellow citizens in his county, until the approaches of his final sickness obliged him to resign. His office brought more distinctly and generally into notice the rare excellence of the man. Men like him, are not often met with in a generation. Whoever met him casually could not easily forget him, and delighted in him. By the charm of his manner and conversation, and by the life and spirit which he infused into the social circle around him, he imparted as much happiness to others, as it was possible for a man, by his private personal character, to do. He was the most social of men, and he infected every one with the same spirit. He dissolved at once the reserve and shyness which so easily besets the Anglo-Saxon, and made others as easy, frank and cordial as himself. It was impossible

to resist the fresh, vivid interest he took in conversation, or to be cold and unimpressed under the influence of the warm sympathy which he expressed with the most delicate tact, and with the nicest shades of language, in the thoughts and feelings of others—and this power and influence extended to all sets and classes of men—nothing good in human nature was too common-place for his interest, and out of the most common-place, he contrived to extract something genuine and peculiar; with the higher and nobler impulses, his spirit rose in most cordial response.

His mind was very quick and active, and if not strikingly original, was fresh and very suggestive of thoughts to others, and was still more remarkable for its power of adaptation to the intellectual level of others. He never showed himself above the sympathies, or comprehension, or interests of the commonest, and he could well sustain his part in the most instructive and interesting conversation with men of acknowledged attainments and superiority. His heart shone through all his conversation, diffusing the warmest light, and creating a social atmosphere, in which every good feeling started into new growth. A day or an hour with him, made one's cares drop, and life become younger and fresher. He was gifted with much fancy, and a most delicate and exuberant humor, and when excited by an unusual flow of spirits, or the society of more intimate friends, he could keep a circle in laughter for hours with the outpourings of his mirth. He had much genuine wit, and his ideas, coming together from distant and opposite points, sparkled with the light of sudden and unexpected contrasts. His wit and humor had the rare charm of creating no uneasiness. Mr. Sedgwick could not, knowingly, injure the feelings or character of any one.

Kindness and affection were inherent elements of his very being and nature; and his sympathy and wit, and social power and charm, all rested on the broadest and firmest foundations of honor, truth and religion. Much as he was loved, he was equally respected. He was not less socially what a gentleman should be, than he endeavored to be, and was, what morally

a man ought to be. Keenly as he enjoyed much of life, and keenly as he imparted enjoyment to others, he never preferred, for himself or others, happiness or indulgence to duty—and duty with him, stood in her own high and clear atmosphere. His great delight, for it never seemed in him like a duty, was in doing something for others—and this was the occupation of what others often consider as their leisure hours. Thoughtful kindnesses, essential favors and assistance, not done now and then, as a task or penance, but instinctively and unconsciously, and with his whole heart and soul, were scattered through every day of his life. His disinterestedness seemed never conscious of the sacrifices it made. He was truly humble, and shunned the imputation of excellence, as if it was almost a fault. For the young, and those struggling with heavy or dangerous trials, he was especially considerate and watchful. He never despaired of the effects of kindness, and how much his kindness effected few can adequately reckon. His charity was distilled into every hour of his life, and kept it fresh and full of usefulness to its close.

His hospitality—an inherited virtue—should not be omitted, for how many have partaken of it? In the summer season, particularly, his house in Lenox was the resort of all those seeking health and recreation among the beautiful hills and the pure air of Berkshire. All were cordially welcomed, and refreshed in mind and spirits, as well as in body, for his presence and example quickened the spirit of his whole household. All were treated with equal kindness, the distinguished, and he who had no name in the world. The young forgot their shyness, the old their cares, and each gave to the common entertainment the best of his mind and heart. Long will his memory live as the pleasantest of human recollections, with all those who have ever been under his roof, and long will the traditions of his character linger around his home.

Mr. Sedgwick took a keen interest in all subjects affecting the public rights and general happiness of man. He loved liberty ardently, and he had a strong faith in the benefits of its universal diffusion. He believed that men, if left to themselves,



would not go permanently astray, and he was as inclined to risk the cause of good government on this principle, as on any artificial checks, or restraining devices. Though ardent in his political feelings, he was not a partizan, and never left the threshold of clear principle.

W. M., JR., *Boston Daily Advertiser.*  
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